A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE TWO TEXAS EXTENSION PROGRAMS: AGENTS' PERCEPTIONS, UNDERSTANDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP

A Record of Study

by

SONJA LATRICE STUEART-DAVIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

August 2011

Major Subject: Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications

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Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee,	Chanda Elbert
	David Lawver
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ABSTRACT

A Descriptive Study of the Two Texas Extension Programs: Agents' Perceptions, Understanding and Recommendations for Strengthening the Partnership. (August 2011)

Sonja Latrice Stueart-Davis, B.S.; M.S., Prairie View A&M University

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee, Dr. Chanda Elbert
Dr. David Lawver

Texas is one of 17 states with both 1862 and 1890 Extension programs. The purpose of this study was to examine the partnership amongst agents of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program, in counties that have both Extension programs. Seventy-eight agents participated in the study, of which, 73% (N=57) were employed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and 24% *(N*=19*)* were employed by the Cooperative Extension Program.

Cohen's *D* Effect Size was used to determine the practical significance of differences among agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, along with the agents' understanding of the partnership, willingness to partner and knowledge of the Operational Guidelines. As part of the study, agents also identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of having two programs in the State and provided recommendations for strengthening the partnership.

Among agents, there was a high degree of relevance for Texas AgriLife Extension Service, while there was a moderate degree of relevance for the Cooperative

Extension Program-Prairie View A&M. Cohen's *D* Effect size suggested a large practical difference amongst agents in their perception of both Extension programs. Findings indicated a moderate degree of knowledge of the Operational Guidelines and understanding of the partnership amongst agents. Cohen's *D* Effect size value (d =.1.29) and (d =1.30) suggested a large practical differences amongst agents, from the two programs, in relation to their willingness to partner and understanding of the partnership respectively.

Strengths of having two Extension programs identified by agents were the Extension programs ability to reach new and diverse audiences and address community and state needs. Weaknesses identified were agents competing against one another for audiences, two programs causing confusion to clientele, and a lack of understanding on how to collaborate. Opportunities of having two Extension programs identified were collaborating on programs, reaching diverse audiences, and the ability to provide more services. Agents provided recommendations of better communication to understanding the partnership and how to partner, clearer job descriptions to prevent duplication and competition, and making the citizens the priority instead of the Extension programs.

DEDICATION

This record of study is dedicated to my husband, Dennis, and son, Dennis Jr. The years that it has taken me to earn this degree have been difficult, but in spite of mood swings, late nights and days away, you continued to support, encourage and love me. It would have been hard to accomplish this goal without your unconditional love, understanding and support.

To my mother and father, thanks so much for being examples and instilling in me a strong work ethic. To my son, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and all of my family, I hope that I have inspired you to seek higher education. It comes with sacrifice, hard work and dedication, but the end result is priceless. In life no one can ever take away your "Education and Knowledge".

Years ago, college was not in my future plans. Mrs. Minnie Cyrus, my high school home economics teacher, had her own plans for my life. She encouraged me to attend college and later became one of my college professors. I dedicate this record of study to her for directing me down the path of higher education.

"when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole...race enters with me" -Anna Julia Cooper

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for his grace and mercy that has brought and kept me. I count it all joy. Throughout this process, I referenced Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

I owe gratitude to my husband, Dennis Davis, and son, Dennis Jr. for sacrificing time, finances, attention and what may have seemed like love throughout the process. Thanks for your continued support and I love you both very much.

My mother, Queenie Shaw, has always been a strong driven woman, and when times were tough, I pulled on her strength. I've always been told that I possess the temperament of my father, L.T. Stueart. This characteristic helped me to be patient with others and myself during difficult times. A special thanks to my siblings, Master Sergeant Andre Lewis, Chief Master Sergeant Juan C. Lewis, Angela Sawyer and Chiquitia Stueart, who has been there for me both personally and professionally.

I'm appreciative of the Doc@Distance faculty and staff of Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University and the expertise you have provided. A special thanks to Dr. Chanda Elbert, Dr. David Lawver, Dr. Alvin Larke, Jr. and Dr. Scott Burris for serving on my committee. Clarice Fulton, you are a special lady, placed in a position that is often overlooked, but essential to the success of the Doc@Distance program and graduate students. Thanks so much for directing me and making sure that all deadlines were met. Thanks to the Cohort 3 members of the Doc@Distance Program with special

acknowledgements to the Mission Control Group, Dr. Allen Malone, Laurie Lutz and Larry Payton.

I would like to thank the agents, and administration of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University and Texas AgriLife Extension Service. To my fellow agents, thanks for participating in the study and trusting that I would analyze and interpret the data in an ethical manner. I would like to express gratitude to Dr. Freddie Richards and Mr. Kyle Smith for their letters of support.

I'm grateful to Dr. Linda Willis for encouraging me to venture off on this educational journey and all the leadership and guidance provided over the years. Dr. Nelson Daniels, thanks for your inspiration, prayers and encouragement. When I didn't believe in myself, the two of you didn't allow me to give up and challenged me professionally.

I would like to express gratitude to Jean Suh for her patience and working tirelessly with me on Instant Survey. To Dr. Jamilia Blake, Paul Pope, Dr. Wayne Thompson and Dr. Gary Briers, thanks for your invaluable input and assistance with the data analysis. Dr. Wash Jones, thanks so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to edit my record of study. You are blessed with talents that you don't mind sharing with others. To Dr. Shannon Degenhart thank you for always being a phone call or email away to provide assistance.

I'm grateful to my Greater Macedonia Baptist Church family and many others for your encouragement, thoughtfulness and prayers.

NOMENCLATURE

CEP-PVAMU	Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
TAES	Texas AgriLife Extension Service
TAEX	Texas Agricultural Extension Service
TCE	Texas Cooperative Extension

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Texas is one of 17 states with two land-grant institutions offering Extension programs that provide research-based, educational information and training to the citizens of the state. Texas Extension is comprised of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. The administration for Texas AgriLife Extension Service is located on the campus of Texas A&M University in College Station, with offices located in 250 Texas counties. The Cooperative Extension Program's administration is located on the campus of Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas and has staff in 24 Texas counties.

The two extension programs work cooperatively to create a "seamless" system of unified, mirrored programs available to all citizens of the State of Texas. Agents employed by both programs receive the same professional development opportunities to enable them to deliver quality programs to their respective audiences.

Establishment of the Land-Grant System

To understand the development of Texas Extension accurately, one must understand the historical framework that led to the establishment of the Land-Grant System and the nation's Cooperative Extension Service. In 1862, the Morrill Land-

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This record of study follows the style of *Journal of Agricultural Education*.

Grant Act was passed and provided land to each state's congressional representative for use to sell as an endowment to support the development of one institution to teach agriculture, home economics and mechanical arts and other professions to include military science. Prior to the 1862 Morrill Act, education was only attainable for the rich and elite (Hurt, 2002). Institutions established as a result of the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act are referred to as 1862 institutions.

States that denied African American students the opportunity to attend their 1862 institutions led to the establishment of the second Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1890. The Act provided additional endowments that allowed states to make higher education accessible to Black students in existing institutions or by establishing separate facilities.

> Provisions of the act were that no money shall be paid out under this act to any State or Territory for the support and maintenance of a college where a distinction of race and color is made in the admission of students, but the establishment and maintenance of such colleges separately for white and colored students shall be held to be in compliance with the provisions of this act if the funds received in such State or Territory be equitably divided…This act providing for racial distribution of funds naturally stimulated the organization of Negro colleges in all Southern states. (Mayberry, 1989, p. 32)

Sixteen states established separate institutions and made education more attainable for African-American students. Federal funds were allocated between the state's land-grant universities in a "just" but not necessarily equal manner. Southern States such as Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, Texas, Kentucky, Virginia, Mississippi,

Missouri and Maryland provided funding to existing Black schools. Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia used their endowments to establish separate land-grant institutions for Blacks (Tegene, 2002).

> According to Hurt (2002, p. 194), "These land-grant colleges, however, suffered from chronic underfunding and discrimination. Instead of becoming major institutions for the training of African-American men and women in agricultural practices and science, they served as little more than preparatory or high schools well into the twentieth century."

There were seventeen schools classified as 1890 institutions under the Second Morrill Act. Tuskegee adopted the land-grant philosophy throughout its history, and has been recognized as a leader amongst 1890 land-grant institutions. In 1893, "The state granted the school its independence and incorporated a semiprivate board of trustees to govern it. Thus, Tuskegee University is not a land-grant college, despite the fact that it was granted 25,000 acres of land by the United States Congress in 1899" (Cooperative State Research, Education, Extension, 2004 on line).

> Because of its academic philosophy and beginnings, Alabama's Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, later named Tuskegee Institute and now Tuskegee University, is considered to be an 1890 land-grant institution. Tuskegee was established in 1881 by the Alabama legislature. (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p. 14)

Hatch Act of 1887

Connecticut is the home of the first known agriculture experiment station. During 1875, agricultural experiment stations primarily tested chemical fertilizers sold to farmers to ensure the quality of the product and protected the farmers from being cheated by manufacturers. In 1887, the Hatch Act, introduced by William Hatch of Missouri and J.Z. George of Mississippi, was passed. The Hatch Act established State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAESs) and farms on the campuses of both the 1862 and later the 1890 land-grant institutions. Periodic reports, annual reports and occasional bulletins were sent to each newspaper in the state and to individual farmers upon request as a result of the Hatch Act (Hurt, 2002).

> The purpose of the Hatch Act was to aid in acquiring and diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects connected with agriculture. The Act promoted scientific investigation and experiments while respecting the principles and applications of agricultural science. (http://msucares.com/about_msucares/hatch.html)

The experiment stations conducted research related to problems that rural citizens encountered on their farms. Unfortunately, a disconnect existed between the research being conducted at the experiment station and the delivery of the information to the farmers. Farmers weren't receptive to the so called "book farming" nor were they reading the research documents produced at the experiment stations (Hurt, 2002). Seaman Knapp, a USDA leader, used demonstrations as a technique for illustrating and

disseminating the research to the people in a manner that they were receptive to learning. The combined efforts of the USDA and the experiment stations led to the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, and the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Cooperative Extension Service

Follow-up legislation to the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the Hatch Act of 1887, led to the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and formally established the national-level Cooperative Extension Service as we know it today. Introduced by Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia and Congressman Asbury F. Lever of South Carolina , the Smith-Lever Act authorized each state and territory to create its own Extension program (CSREES, 2004). The purpose of the Cooperative Extension System was to aid in diffusing among the

> people of the United States useful and practical information generated by research at the land-grant institutions of each state and territory" (Hurt, 2002, p. 256). According to federal legislation, the nature of Extension work was to be the development of practical applications of research knowledge, giving of instructions, and demonstrations related to agriculture, home economics, and subjects related to needs of people not attending resident colleges. (Hurt, 2002)

Extension agents served as change agents to help farm families apply new agriculture techniques through publications, demonstrations and home visits. Lifelong learning was emphasized and Extension agents provided programming for various ages

and audiences. The 1862 programs served European American audiences, and the 1890 programs, referred to as the Negro Extension, served African-American audiences.

The Smith-Lever Act authorized the federal government to support, with matching state funds, the creation of an extension system at land-grant colleges (CSREES). The Act provided Federal funds to the 1862 institutions, but no direct provisions referenced the dissemination of funds to 1890 institutions. The supervision, coordination and administration of both the 1862 and 1890 Extension programs were administered by the 1862 Extension until 1964 (Willis & Fehlis, 2003).

The 1964 Civil Rights Act declared it illegal to provide programming based on race. Therefore, Extension programming at the 1890 institutions, throughout the nation, by the Negro Extension System was discontinued. In some instances, individuals employed by 1890 institutions no longer had jobs and clientele who previously benefited from the educational outreach efforts of the Negro Extension System no longer were served.

The Council of 1890 Presidents met with Congress to convey the needs of audiences previously served by 1890 Extension Programs and requested the reestablishment of Extension programs on their campuses. In 1972, all 1890 institutions including Tuskegee Institute began receiving specified funding to support their Extension programming by way of their state 1862 institution. The 1890 institutions began receiving funding directly in 1977 as a result of Public Law 95-113, and administrative duties became the responsibility of the 1890 institutions' administrative

head (Willis & Fehlis, 2003). Continued coordination between the 1862 and 1890 institutions was to remain essential for a unified system concept.

Texas Extension Programs

Texas Extension has the same historical developments as the nations Cooperative Extension Service and the Negro Extension Service. "In Texas, both the 1862 and 1890 institutions were designated to conduct Extension programs by the Smith- Lever Act of 1914 and to work cooperatively to create a unified Extension Program. In doing so, they were to work in cooperation to extend benefits of the Cooperative Extension Service to both the White and Black populations of Texas" (Willis & Fehlis, 2003, p.2).

For approximately fifty years, like many other southern states, Texas Extension provided programs in a segregated method, whereas Texas A&M University primarily served the White citizens, and Prairie View A&M University served the Black citizens. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregated programming by Extension based on race and programming by the Prairie View A&M Extension Program was discontinued until 1972.

In conformity with the National Cooperative Extension Service and amendments to the Smith-Lever Act, in 1972, funding was provided for Prairie View A&M's Cooperative Extension Program to meet the needs of low-income, minorities and hard to reach audiences. Funding for Prairie View A&M's Extension program was sent to Texas A&M University. Texas A&M conducted the administrative and supervisory

duties for Prairie View A&M and disbursements were sent to Prairie View A&M to support programmatic efforts (Willis & Fehlis, 2003). The 1972 Legislation included additional guidelines to ensure coordination between the 1890 and 1862 institutions.

Prairie View A&M began receiving direct funding in 1977 and the Cooperative Extension Program's fiscal operations and administration returned to the campus. The Federal Food and Agricultural Act of 1977 provided funds directly to Prairie View for administration and programming efforts. By returning, the administration was directly responsible for budgeting, planning and continued coordination with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. The 1977 Federal Food and Agricultural Act specified that 1890 programs provide services to low-income audiences and that race was not a provision for participating in 1890 programs (Willis & Fehlis, 2003).

In 1977, a Memorandum of Understanding between Texas Agricultural Extension Service of Texas A&M University and Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program was drafted to define coordination and continuation of a unified State Extension Program. It stated the following:

> Whereas, Prairie View A&M University and Texas A&M University have entered into Memoranda of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry out Extension work in the State of Texas; and whereas, Section 1444 of Public Law 95-113, Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 as amended by the Food Security Act of 1985 requires that a single, comprehensive program of Extension be developed for the State.

Now; therefore, in order to provide for effective administration of a single comprehensive State program, the President of Prairie View A&M University and the Chancellor of Texas A&M University System acting subject to the approval of the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System hereby agree as follows:

A. To mutually develop a single comprehensive program of Extension work of the State, which shall be described in a joint statement setting forth the division of responsibilities and area of cooperation between the institutions. The comprehensive statement shall remain in force until it is revised by mutual agreement.
B. To submit the comprehensive program statement and any revisions thereof to the Secretary of Agriculture for approval.
C. To mutually develop detailed plans of work that will be submitted on an annual basis to Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (ES-USDA), for review and approval by the Administrator for ES-USDA.
D. To take the necessary steps to effect a joint Extension program at the county, district, and State levels.
E. To recognize the primary responsibility of each institution for the selection and performance of Extension projects to be carried out by it as part of the comprehensive program of Extension works in the State.
F. To have planned interactions between the Director of Cooperative Extension Service (the Texas Agricultural Extension Service “TAEX”) and the

Administrative Head of the 1890 Extension Program (1890 Extension) to insure that annual plans of work and projects carried out are jointly planned and coordinated.

G. To develop organizational structures at the county, district, and state levels that promotes unified programs and discourage fragmentary or duplicative programs. (Texas Agricultural Extension Service and Prairie View Extension Program, 1977)

In 1977, the Cooperative Extension Program's educational programs were delivered by program aides, who were supervised by Texas Agricultural Extension Service agents. Program aides were members of the community where they worked and were trained to provide Extension educational programming. The original agreement was modified in 1987 between the administration of both the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University to allow Prairie View A&M to employ Extension agents along with Program aides (Willis, 1991). Identification of counties to place Extension agents employed by the Cooperative Extension Program would be a coordinated effort between Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program. Criteria identified for CEP agents to be placed in counties were based on large amount of low-income and minority population, need for extension educational programs, and the county populations' median educational level (Willis, 1991).

During the 1980's, administration from both Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program developed the Operational Guidelines to

govern the administrative and operational relationships between the Extension services. The Operational Guidelines provided a framework for the day to day operations, supervision, protocol and coordination of the agents in county offices.

Often the need for two Extension programs is questioned by citizens and local and state officials. The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) conducted an Interim Study in 2002 to review the mission and activities of then Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE) and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program (PVCEP) to determine if racial discrimination existed and make recommendations to improve efficiencies, funding opportunities and services to the citizens of Texas (2003, p. i.). Six findings and recommendations were made as result of the study:

1. No racial discrimination was found among TCE or PVCEP. Programming by both is made available to all, but the majority of the individuals served by PVCEP are minorities. A large number of the minority population is low income families.
2. TCE and PVCEP have different mission statements that outline their targeted audience. Similar programming is conducted by each; however, both programs work together to share expertise and provide outreach programming to benefit all citizens of the State.
3. Improve coordination of human and fiscal resources provided by both TCE and PVCEP.
4. PVCEP, as a unit of the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences and is not consistent with many other states' Extension structure. In other

states Extension is not associated with one particular academic discipline or functions as an entity of the university's outreach unit. Because of the funding sources and the current structure in Texas, it has hindered PVCEP agents from receiving equitable salary increases to remain consistent with agents employed by TCE.

5. Salary inequities were found amongst TCE and PVCEP agents. As the number of years employed increased, so did the salary gap largely due to the organizational structure of the PVCEP.
6. TCE is a State agency and supported by state funds, with support from the USDA and County Commissioners Courts. PVCEP is not an individual state agency and is a special item of the Prairie View A&M University (state agency). It is funded 2/3 by federal funds and 1/3 by state funds. (Texas A&M University System, 2002)

Recommendations of the study include the following:

- Revising of the Operational Guidelines to reflect current terminology and guidelines for selecting counties to place CEP-PVAMU agents.
- Communicate with Commissioners' Court the advantages of having both Extension programs.
- Enhance the availability of effective communication methods (videoconferencing) between the two programs.
- Restructuring of PVCEP as a unit of the university.

- Assigning responsibility of the continued coordination of the two Extension program to the Vice Chancellor for Agriculture.
- Address salary inequities amongst staff of TCE and CEP with annual monitoring of positions by the Vice-Chancellor for Agriculture.
- Items to assist PVCEP meet its Federal match with the collaboration of TCE.

The Interim Study benefited the Texas Extension partnership. It educated and informed individuals of the two programs by sharing their uniqueness, roles, and target audiences. It disclosed issues related to salary inequities by Extension program and the need for coordination amongst the administrators. The recommendations provided as a result of the study, were valuable in strengthening the partnership.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides programs for the broad population of the state, whereas the Cooperative Extension Program targets limited income families and individuals. Figure 1 is a map of Texas counties. Texas AgriLife Extension Service has 250 county Extension offices and maintains a day to day presence in all 254 counties in the state of Texas. The Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View currently has a presence in 24 counties. Both Extension programs provide programs in the subject areas of Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H & Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources and Community Economic Development.

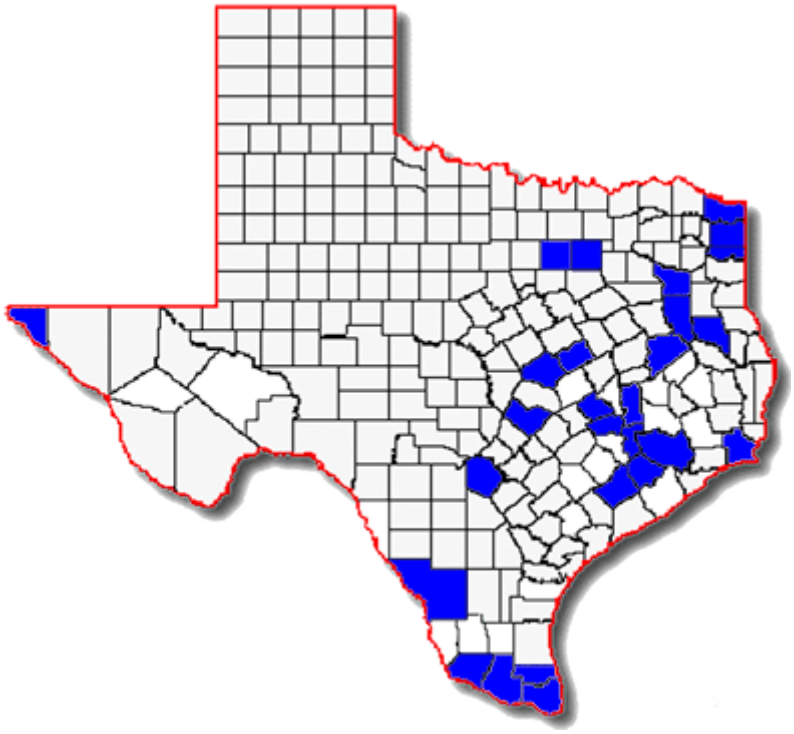

Figure 1. Map of Texas Counties with both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU Agents.

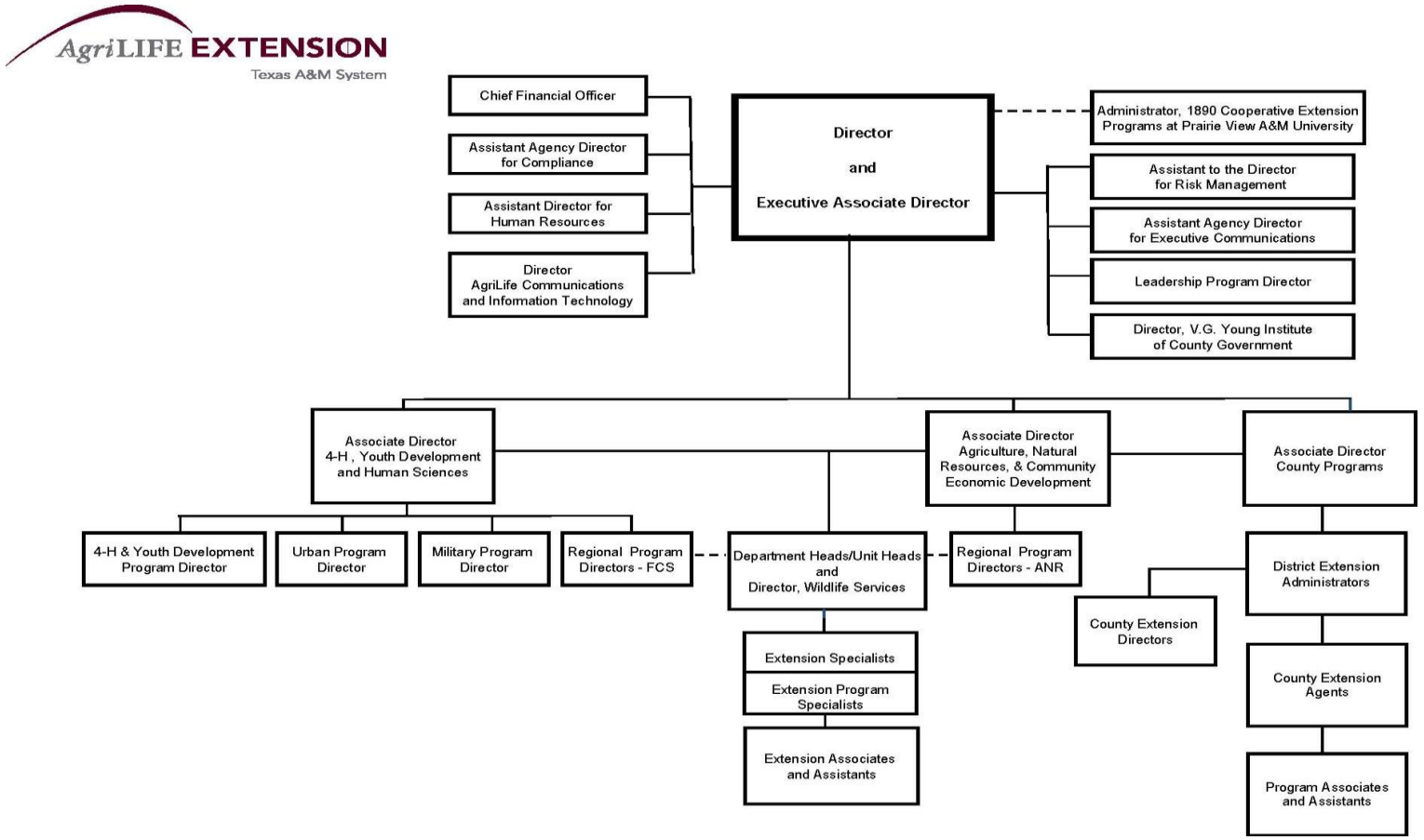

Figure 2. Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Organizational Structure.

The mission of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is to improve the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education (Willis & Fehlis, 2003, p. 4). It has a very detailed organization structure, as depicted in Figure 2. The figure details the various administrative, programmatic and support roles of the agency, as well as shows coordination with the Administrator of the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University.

The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program is to deliver research-based information and informal educational opportunities focused on identified issues and needs to Texans of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, giving primary emphasis to individuals with limited resources (Willis & Fehlis, 2003, p. 4). Figure 3 is the Cooperative Extension Program Organizational Chart and is much different than Texas AgriLife Extension Service's structure. It is part of the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences and has a Dean/Extension Administrator as opposed to a Director.

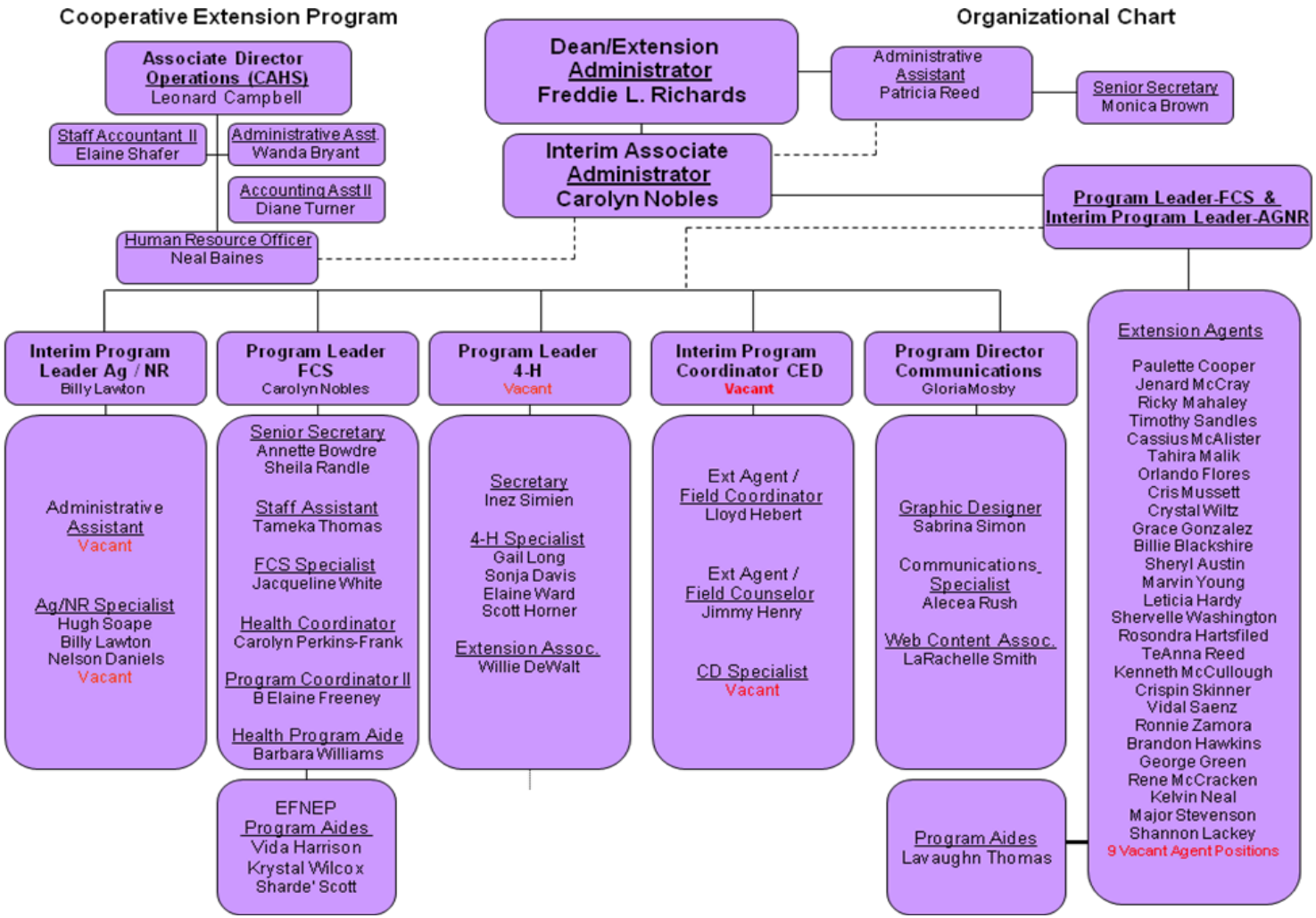

Figure 3. Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University's Organizational Chart.

Statement of the Problem

Texas is one of 17 states with both 1862 and 1890 Extension programs. Limited research is available pertaining to the 1862 and 1890 agents' partnership in counties that offer dual Extension programs. As Extension encounters federal and state budget cuts, it is imperative for both programs to explore ways to continue providing quality educational programming and resources to clientele. Agents from both extension services have to be knowledgeable, and understand each program's historical foundation. As funding to support federal, state and county agencies programs become more competitive and limited, the need to strengthen the internal partnership is at a greater demand than ever.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the existing partnership amongst county agents of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the extension agents of the Cooperative Extension Program in counties where both Extension programs are present. This will be achieved by examining the agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, their understanding of the partnership, and their willingness to partner.

This study will assist agents at the county level to understand, evaluate, and strengthen the partnership of Texas Extension. Although Texas Extension programs have a unique partnership amongst land-grant institutions, this study may help other states with dual Extension programs. The research also included open-ended questions to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities as perceived by agents in having two programs and allowed them the opportunity to provide recommendations for improving the partnership to Texas Extension administrators.

The researcher realized that no two counties are exactly alike, and individual perceptions and experiences may differ. However, recommendations general enough for application throughout the state may exist. The researcher identified the following objectives for the study:

1. Determine the demographics of the subjects who participated in the study.
2. Examine agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
3. Examine agent's perception of the relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program.
4. Determine agents' knowledge of the Operational Guidelines as a resource for understanding how the partnership works.
5. Determine agents' understanding of the existing partnership between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program.
6. Examine agents' willingness to partner and collaborate on programs, when possible, to serve the citizens of the State of Texas.

7. Determine the agents' perceived strengths of having two Extension programs in Texas.
8. Determine the agents' perceived weakness of having two Extension programs in Texas.
9. Determine agents' perception of opportunities in having two Extension programs in the state of Texas.
10. Determine agents' recommendations for strengthening the partnership and working relationship of agents at the county level.

Definition of Terms

1. Texas Extension- Texas Extension is comprised of Texas AgriLife Extension Service of Texas A&M University and the Cooperative Extension Program of Prairie View A&M University.
2. Texas AgriLife Extension Service- Agency funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, State of Texas and Texas Counties. Its mission is to improve the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education. It also may be referred to as Texas Agricultural Extension Service or Texas Cooperative Extension. (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/amtpw)
3. Cooperative Extension Program-Extension program of Prairie View A&M University and is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and the

state. Its mission is to deliver research-based information and informal educational opportunities focused on identified issues and needs to Texans of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, giving primary emphasis to individuals with limited resources. (http://pvcep.pvamu.edu)

4. County Extension Agents- Agents employed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service who work in Texas counties to deliver research- based educational information to the citizens. The county of employment supplements part of the agent's salary, thereby designating the individual as a County Extension Agent.
5. Extension Agents- Agents employed by the Cooperative Extension Program- Prairie View A&M University who deliver research-based educational information to limited income clientele. They work in county offices along with the County Extension Agents.
6. Director of Texas AgriLife Extension Service- The administrative head of the organization who is responsible for ensuring the agency's mission is fulfilled.
7. Administrator of the Cooperative Extension Program-The administrative head of the organization who is responsible for ensuring the programs' mission is fulfilled.
8. Operational Guidelines- A framework established by administration from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program that outlines the day to day management, supervision and collaboration of Texas Extension at the county and administrative levels (Willis & Fehlis, 2003).

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to only those extension agents employed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service or the Cooperative Extension Program of Prairie View A&M University in counties where both programs are present. Agents were encouraged to be open and honest with their responses. Because of the uniqueness of Texas Extension, it may be difficult to generalize the information to other state land-grant systems.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to agents in 23 counties of the 254 counties in Texas. The counties are: Bell, Bexar, Bowie, Cass, Cherokee, Dallas, El Paso, Falls, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Hidalgo, Jefferson, Marion, Nacogdoches, Smith, Starr, Tarrant, Travis, Waller, Washington, Wharton and Webb. Participants were selected because they previously worked or currently work in a county that has agents from both Extension programs. Burleson County was excluded from the study because the Cooperative Extension Program staff member is classified as a Program Aide, and subsequently is supervised by the County Extension Agent of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Basic Assumptions

- The subjects participated in the research at their own free will.
- The subjects are located in a county or have worked in a county where there is a presence of both extension programs.
- No two counties are exactly alike, and individual experiences differ.
- The survey instrument is reliable and valid.
- Survey respondents were open and honest in their answers.

Significance of the Study

Extension programs across the nation have a reputation for providing quality educational programs and positively impacting families. The Texas Extension Program provides a partnership similar, but not identical, to other state land-grant programs. The two programs' partnership has functioned well since 1977; however with any partnership room for improvement exists.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

History has played a critical role in the establishment of the relationship that exists between the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program. This research examined five constructs: (a) Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University, (b) Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, (c) Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines, (d) Understanding of the Partnership and (d) Willingness to Partner. In addition to quantitative questions, open-ended questions gathered agents perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities related to having two extension programs in the State and provided recommendations to the administration of both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University for strengthening the partnership.

The National Research Agenda for Agricultural Education and Communication outlines the research to be conducted in the field. This study will identify the needs and competencies of professional practitioners in non-formal agricultural extension education, which falls under the category of "Agricultural Education in Domestic and International Settings: Extension & Outreach (National Research Agenda, 2007).

The chapter is outlined in the following format:

1. Relevant Theories
2. Perception Literature

3. Partnerships Literature
4. National Extension Partnership Literature
5. Texas Extension Partnership Literature
6. Cooperation and Collaboration Literature
7. Administrative Influences

Relevant Theories

Deutsch's Theory of Cooperation (Kearsley, 2007) discussed competition, individualism and cooperation in a social concept and ideas proven successful in partnerships for developing cooperative relationships. A lack of knowledge and understanding of an individual agency's missions, purposes and relevancy may prevent true partnerships from matriculating or result in limited cooperation. When partners have limited knowledge or make assumptions about other partners, it limits the true partnership from developing. In addition to individual goals and objectives, true partnerships outline goals and objectives that each hope to achieve as an end result.

For partnerships to be successful, both parties have to be content and fulfilled. Norms of cooperation identified by Deutsch were honesty, respect, responsiveness, acknowledging responsibility, extending forgiveness, emphasizing the positive and seeking common ground (Deutsch, 2000). These norms represent characteristics of strong partnerships.

Along with the norms, Deutsch realized that interdependence exists in cooperative relationships. The interdependence was described as either positive or

negative in nature. In the case of negative interdependent relationships, one party's success correlates with the others failure, while positive interdependent relationships are characterized as success correlating with success, or failure with failure. The positive relationship results in a win-win for both parties involved and are characterized by more effective communication, coordination, open and friendly attitudes, mutuality (Deutsch, 2000). Negative relationships take on the identity of competition and sometimes may result in a lose-lose because no true partnership exists.

Often opportunities for partnering may exist; however, underlying barriers may prevent collaboration. These barriers may include limitations due to funding sources, fear of the loss of identity, recognition and misunderstanding of how to partner. These barriers present themselves in Texas Extension. Agents expressed loss of identity, competition, and lack of coordination at the state level and limited funding as barriers to partnering. In addition to perception barriers, communication may serve as a partnership barrier. Communication is an integral part of a partnership. Barriers to communication are those things that prevent a message from being understood clearly and taking meanings out of its intended context. Barriers to communication may take the form of preconception, stereotyping, verbal and non-verbal messages and defensive tactics.

In Willis' (1991) Extension study, she noted, the two Extension programs are frequently stereotyped. The majority of the 1862 employees is white and serves white clients, while the majority of the 1890 employees are black and serves black clients. In terms of staffing, although both Texas Extension programs are more diverse than they were in 1991, the majority of the 1862 staff remains white, while the1890 staff remains

black. This perception has caused a barrier for partnering amongst extension staff, while it may have added diversity to address the programmatic needs of Extension clientele.

Bruners' Constructivist Theory addresses the influence that current and past knowledge may have on perceptions (Kearsley, 2007). Since 1915 these two agencies have worked together, and great strides have been made towards improving and strengthening the partnership. Initially, a Memorandum of Understanding was developed between the two programs to outline how the programs would function and prevent the duplication of services and disintegration of efforts. A set of Operational Guidelines were developed in 2003 to outline the administrative and operational relationships between the two state Extension services and to provide a framework for the day to day operations, supervision, protocol and coordination of the agents in county offices. The documents only are effective and resourceful only when individuals are aware of their existence and the information contained within the document. Other efforts made to increase cooperation have been including agents from both programs on committees that directly impact Texas Extension, including both logos on joint documents and making provisions for equitable salaries and salary increases for agents from both extension programs. County offices now display both logos to identify that both programs have a presence. Through these efforts the partnership has improved, but more is needed to enhance the partnership at the county level.

Conceptual Framework

A Conceptual Framework is provided in Figure 4 to provide a visual of the study. The independent variables in the study were the agents. The dependent variables identified were: Relevance of the Extension programs, Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines, Willingness to partner and Understanding of the partnership. The researcher sought to determine the agent's perception of the dependent variables. An additional row explored strengths, weakness, opportunities and recommendations for improving the partnership. After the study is completed, the researcher anticipates enhanced communication and collaboration, which will ultimately strengthen the partnership of the Extension programs at the county level to better serve the citizens of Texas.

Perception Literature

Perception is the ability to process or use information received through the sense organs. It is influenced by background, knowledge, past experiences, present experiences, personality, motivation and emotional state (Akande, 2009). Perceptions also are driven by individuals' motivation, goals, intelligence, employment experiences, skills and self confidence level. An agent's willingness to partner may have been influenced by their perception or past experiences.

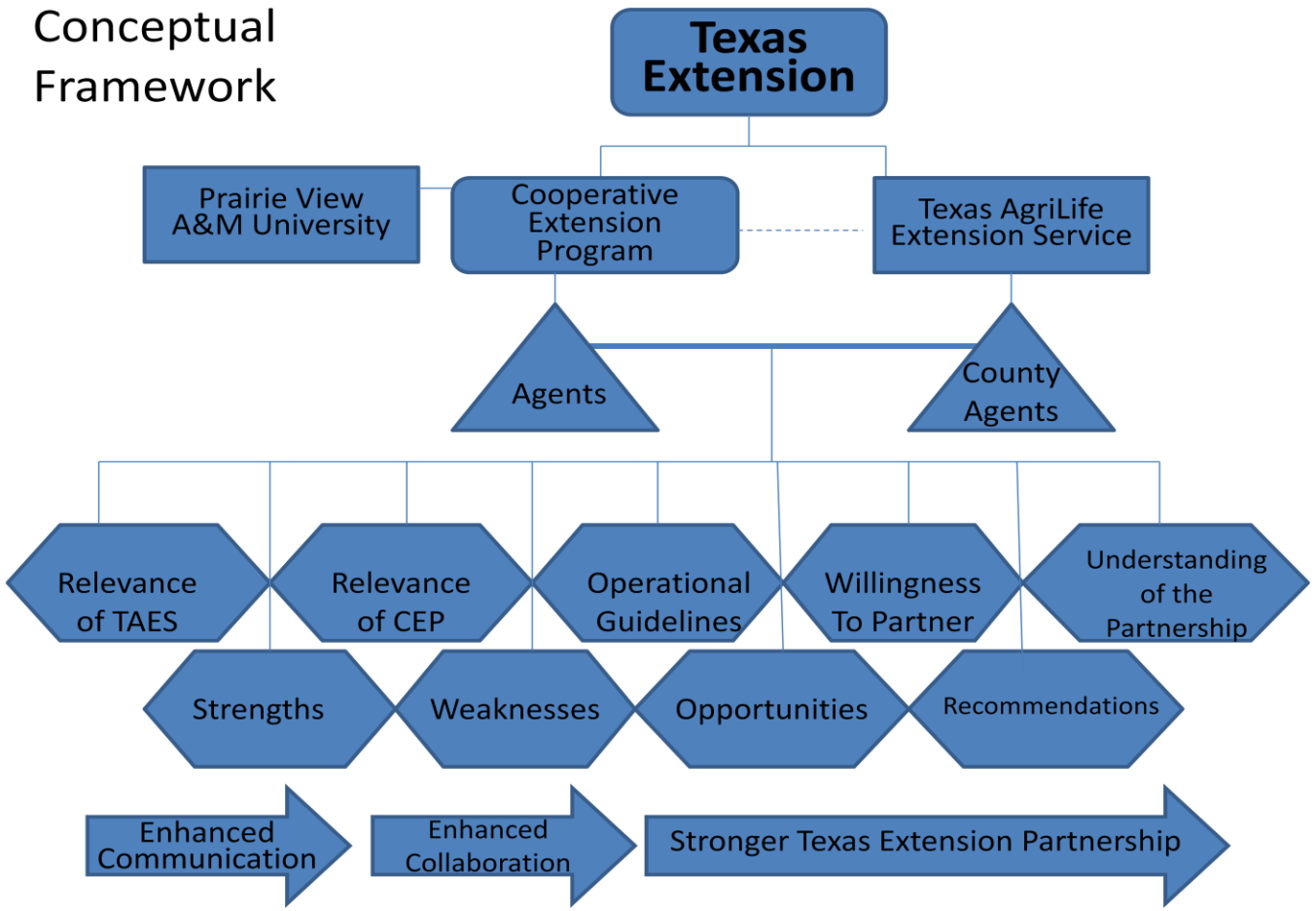

Figure 4. **Conceptual Framework.**

The Constructivist Theory suggests that perception often is influenced by our experiences and expectations (Kearsley, 2007). The history of these organizations plays an important role in the perception the agents have, and their willingness to partner and collaborate. In applying this theory to the study, some Extension county staff members do not understand the history of the organizations or the purpose of both programs. There perception is that only one Extension program is needed in the State of Texas. These thoughts and attitudes may be passed on to stakeholders, clientele or coworkers, causing individuals to question the need for two programs.

Partnerships

Through partnerships, individuals and organizations have enhanced program development efforts for sustaining and increasing productivity. Extension was established on the premises of partnerships and collaborations. Gray, Thomas, Ofori-Boadu (2005) referenced Brannons' definition of partnerships for Extension as "synergy of combined resources supporting integrated research and outreach to address the needs of the primary stakeholders" (p. 146.). In application to the research, the Texas Extension partnership serves to provide a structure for enhancing its capabilities of positively impacting the clientele through educational programming and resources.

The Cooperative Extension Service entails three levels of partnership to include national, state and county. Nationally, the Cooperative Extension System is a partnership between 1862, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions throughout the United

States. This partnership is combined with National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the United States Department of Agriculture. At the state level, partnerships exist between state government offices and university campuses that allow for collaborating on research and grant projects. Bedo (2004) described teaching, research and extension as a "triad of integral ingredients" (p. 13) for the land-grant system and agricultural development. According to her, if one ingredient is missing the other two cannot function effectively. Local partnerships are present by relationships established with local county governments that provide salaries, vehicles, office space, and secretarial support for county agents. The partnership most relevant to this research is the partnership at the county level that exists between the county agents of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program agents.

Successful partnerships require problem solving, adapting and learning. Franz (2003) examined changes in individual who were involved in 10 successful partnerships. Partners were members of the Cornell Cooperative Extension campus faculty and Extension staff and were nominated by their peers. Franze defined transformative learning as "learning that transforms the way the individual, partners and the organization see the world or think about it" (http://www.joe.org/joe/2003april/a1.php). Conditions identified in the article that promoted learning in successful partnerships were: strong partner facilitation; critical reflection; critical events; and partner differences bridged by common purpose (Franze, 2003).

Three types of learning were discussed in the article to include: instrumental, communicative, or transformative. Instrumental was described as task-oriented problem

solving to improve performance. Communicative learning allows for individuals to see other perspectives through presenting different personality types, learning styles and experiences. Transformative learning focuses on the individual making decisions to think clearer and become more aware and responsible for their actions (Franze 2003).

Successful partnerships are also learning oriented and result in partners who are open to new ideas, see across boundaries and embrace change. Working together Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU have sustained a successful partnership at the state level since its inception and continue to explore new ideas for improvement at the county level.

An end result of Transformational Learning was an idea referred to as "independence with interdependence." This condition allows partners to maintain personal independence, while expecting the other to contribute to the project. In this sense, both parties are valued and acknowledge for their contribution while retaining individual identities. In transformational learning, as individuals are transformed, partnerships are transformed.

As a result of Franze's study, she recommended state and county Extension administrators:

- Promote relationships that encourage establishing partnerships
- Address barriers that prevent partnerships from establishing
- Engage in critical reflection amongst staff
- Help staff develop skills needed for facilitating programs
- Promote diversity and inclusion

Franze offered recommendations that can benefit Texas Extension as it seeks partnerships internally or externally. When county staffs are successful in exhibiting partnerships, they should be recognized, in newsletters or other media outlets, for other counties to model. The idea of transforming individuals leads to the transformation of the partnership is one that can deeply enhance Texas Extension.

Loden (2004) defined partnerships as either strategic or traditional. Traditional partnerships function on the premises of setting goals and focusing until the goal is achieved. Strategic partnerships strive to achieve a shared vision. The Texas Extension partnership meets the definition of both. As state partners, both programs work to enhance a shared vision and that vision is the one-program concept of Texas Extension. Partnerships between agents at the county level meet the definition of the traditional partnership; whereas, agents work on county-wide or joint programming issues until the tasks are completed.

National Extension Partnerships

Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), is currently known as the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, which is also part of the federal government's executive branch. NIFA works with states to assist them with identifying and meeting the education, research, extension priorities in those audiences served by extension. It also provides formula funds to land-grant universities annually in addition to grant funds for research. Utilizing extension offices and staff, NIFA responds to needs of children, youth and families nationwide to address issues related to agriculture production, animal and plant health, human health and nutrition, and creation of new products to benefit both rural and urban America.

A great amount of research has focused on the historical perspectives and provided insight on the establishment of the nation's Land-Grant System and Cooperative Extension Service. Gray, Ofori-Boadu, Thomas (2005) examined the collaboration and partnership among CSREES and southern land-grant system institutions. The purpose of the research was to improve the effectiveness of the Cooperative Extension Service and identify the current status of collaborations and partnerships between CSREES and the 1862 and 1890 institutions. The researchers specifically sought to determine the level of satisfaction of the partnership and determine factors most relevant to the partnership. Results of the study were the following:

- 1862 administrators and specialists reported a higher level of dissatisfaction with the 1862/1890 partnership, while administrators were satisfied with the CSREES relationship.
- 1890 administrators also reported a higher level of dissatisfaction with the 1862/1890 partnerships. Both 1890 administrators and specialists were very satisfied with their CSREES partnership.
- Administrators/Directors and Specialist from both the 1862 and 1890 institutions identified the following factors that enhanced the partnership:
    - Number of staff
    - Available funds
    - Administrative support
    - Resource equities of each partner
    - Awareness of common interest
    - Frequency of communication
    - Level of commitment to quality programs
    - Trust among partners
    - Sincerity among partners
    - Dedication
    - Ability to deliver quality programs

Partnership was defined in the article as an agreement between organizations, groups and agencies that have come together for a common goal or purpose (Ansari et

al. 2001). "The effectiveness of a partnership depends on the collective action by individuals of their organization and allow for a more shared communal benefit than each could accomplish as an individual player" (Ansari et al, p. 315). Common themes amongst administrators and specialists from both the 1862 and 1890 universities as it related to effectiveness of the partnership were their ability to bring partners with diverse interests together and having shared visions.

In times of economic difficulties that include federal, state and county budget cuts, collective actions that allow for shared resources and recognition of each contribution would benefit both Extension programs. NIFA provides opportunities for 1862 and 1890 programs to compete for grant funding by states collaborating on projects that would strengthen their program development and funding opportunities.

Texas Extension Partnership

"The mission of Texas AgriLife Extension Service is to improve the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education. The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program is to deliver research-based information and informal educational opportunities focused on identified issues and needs to Texans of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, giving primary emphases to individuals with limited resources" (Willis & Fehlis, 2003, p 1). The missions of these programs are what define their programming efforts. One is general in audience served and the other is specific in who they serve. Not only are

extension services specific in service and audiences, but they are different in the organizational structures as well. Texas AgriLife is an agency of the state of Texas, whereas the Cooperative Extension Program is a unit of Prairie View A&M's College of Agriculture and Human Services.

A limited amount of research exists that has examined the cooperative relationships of the 1862 and 1890 Extension staff in Texas. Willis (1991) conducted a study that examined the Texas 1862 Extension administrators, district directors, specialists and agents' perception of the quality of the Texas 1890 Extension programs. She looked at perceptions held by state and county personnel, program area and other position types. As part of her research, participants were asked to provide their perceived strengths and weaknesses of having two programs and made suggestions for strengthening the partnership.

Findings from her research determined that 1862 administrators' and county agents' perceptions of the 1890 program were more positive than specialists' perceptions. Willis attributed this finding to specialists having limited knowledge of cooperative activity at the county level with 1890 staff in comparison to agents and administrators. Specialists typically are located on the host university's campus; however, some Texas AgriLife Extension Specialists are located at Research Centers throughout the state. By Specialists not sharing offices with 1890 staff, it limited their contact and knowledge of the 1890 programs and services.

Individuals working in the 4-H and home economics program area had higher overall perceptions of the 1890 program in reference to resources to support 1890

programming than those working in the agriculture program area. This finding was attributed to limited access to equipment and supplies needed to conduct agriculture related programs, which were not as readily available to 1890 staff to conduct programs. Home economics and 4-H agents felt stronger about expanding to other counties than those in the agriculture area.

Strengths identified by participants of having two programs were the ability of Extension to target audiences and the 1890 staff's ability to reach a wider audience. Weaknesses mentioned were coordination of 1862 and 1890 programs at the county level and having two Extension programs sometimes was confusing to the general public. The most represented suggestions amongst the subjects for improving the relationship between the extension programs were improving communication and coordination, offering more joint programs, publications and dual supervision.

"In partnerships among organizations and institutions, a lack of formal structure undermines mutual accountability and limits the potential for meaningful cooperation. Turf battles, lack of trust, and competition for funding make organizations unwilling to commit fully to potentially productive partnerships unless mutual accountability is assured through some type of explicit and coherent structure" (Smock, 1999, p. 2). Although a formal structure is in place for the Texas Extension programs, agents identified competition for clients, confusion, trust and the need for more communication as barriers to committing fully to partnership.

Cooperation and Collaboration

The need for cooperation and collaboration amongst Texas Extension is increasing as funding from federal, state and local governments are being reduced and the need to do more with less is clear. Securing external funding has become more competitive and limited. By collaborating when possible, the two extension programs may increase capacity and the ability to secure external grant funds. Cooperation is defined by Rickets & Place as "to act or work with another or others, and, even more salient to associate with others for mutual benefit" (Rickets & Place, 2005 p.1).

Research conducted by Ricketts and Place (2005) examined perceptions that agriculture teachers and 4-H extension agents held regarding cooperation, behavioral intentions and experiences to determine the cooperative environment. The entities have a history built on competition.

The results of the study determined that the idea of cooperation was similar amongst both the Extension agents and Agricultural educators as it related to perception, motivations and experiences. The article examined the question of how do you encourage cooperation between two organizations somewhat built on the premises of competition. The word "co-opetition" was discussed. According to Zindeldin, (2004) "Co-opetition" comes to us from the business and management field, and is used to describe "a business situation in which independent parties co-operate with one another and co-ordinate their activities, thereby collaborating to achieve mutual goals, but at the same time compete with each other as well as with other firms" (p.780).

Both the agriculture science teachers and the extension educators agreed that some level of cooperation should be occurring between the two, but by having no true definition of cooperation may have contributed to the lack thereof. Agriculture teachers and extension educators both felt organizational factors that motivated them to cooperate were their value to youth and benefit of their respective programs. Individual factors were value to youth and enhancing the agriculture industry. Just as the two had shared motivators for working together, they also shared common thoughts on what prevented them from cooperating. Although they felt strongly about cooperating, the experiences were not reflective of their thoughts. In applying, "co-opetition" to the relationship between Texas Extension agents from the two programs, they co-exist because of the partnership and they see the true value of Extension through clientele impacted.

The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) conducted an Interim Study in 2002 to review the mission and activities of the Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE) and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program (PVCEP) to determine if racial discrimination existed, make recommendations to improve efficiencies, and ensure that no duplication of services existed" (2003, p. i.). Six results and key findings were made as a result of the study:

1. No racial discrimination was found among TCE or PVCEP. Programming by both is made available to all, but the majority of the individuals served by PVCEP are minorities.
2. TCE and PVCEP have different mission statements that outline their targeted audiences. Similar programming is conducted by each; however,

both programs work together to share expertise and provide outreach programming to benefit all citizens of the State.

3. Improved coordination of human and fiscal resources by the administration to enhance programmatic services provided by both TCE and PVCEP.
4. PVCEP, as a unit of the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences and is not consistent with many other states' Extension structure. In other states, Extension functions as a unit of the university's outreach or it is not associated with one particular academic discipline. This current structure in Texas has hindered PVCEP agents from receiving equitable salary increases to remain consistent with agents employed by TCE.
5. Salary inequities were found amongst TCE and PVCEP agents. As the number of years employed increased, so did the salary gap.
6. TCE is a State agency supported by state funds with support from the USDA and County Commissioners Courts. PVCEP is not an individual state agency and is a special item of the Prairie View A&M University (state agency). It is funded 2/3 by federal funds and 1/3 by state funds (Texas A&M University System, 2002).

Although no two collaborative relationships function the same, Mattesich and Monsey (1991) identified some common themes associated with successful collaborative relationships. Those identified as influences of successful collaboration were

environment, membership characteristics, process/structure, communications, purpose and resources. In the case of this study, each county and the agents in the county will function differently in the partnership. Some county partnerships are great models for how the partnership can work and agents benefit from working together, while others lack the true partnering concept.

Weigel (1994) conducted research to assess the communication needs of Extension field staff, state specialists and administration in Nevada. Nevada Extension staff expressed a need for more communication related to job performance, organizational decision making and developments and directives of the organization. By addressing the communication needs of the staff, administrators are able to build morale, address misunderstandings as well as conflicts and address programmatic issues and needs of clientele. Communication is critical for cooperation and collaboration in a partnership. Extension offices are distant and spread over counties, districts and regions. The distance may pose problems, but the internet, blogs and web pages have improved organizational communication.

Administrative Influence on Agents

Extension prides itself on exceptional programming, and the ability of its staff to deliver such programs. Boltes, Lippke and Gregory (1995) identified a set of dimensions for determining Extension employee satisfaction that contribute to the organization being effective. Of the seven dimensions identified, the following ranked

highest amongst the employees: work and life balance; strategic planning with a clear direction and vision for the organization; and professional development opportunities that did not encompass the needs of the organization and the need for career development training for new faculty.

Strategic planning is an important process in Extension for program development in obtaining organizational excellence. The researchers acknowledged that just as Extension has a responsibility to remain relevant to clients, it must also remain relevant to its employees and meet their organizational needs (Boltes, et al, 1995). Two positions most relevant to the research are County Extension Directors and District Extension Administrators. The agents who participated in the research from rural counties are supervised by a District Extension Director and agents from urban counties are supervised by a County Extension Director.

Rudd and Sullivan (2000) conducted research with 51 of Florida's County Extension Directors to examine their leadership practices and to determine if variations existed in their leadership practices based on gender. They noted that being an Extension administrator requires both management and leadership qualities to be effective. Leadership as defined by Kouzes and Posner (1995) is the "art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations (p. 30). While management was defined by Robbins and Cenzo (1995) as "the process of getting activities completed efficiently with and through people" (p. 4). Five management functions of extension administrators identified by Buford and Bedeian (1988) were planning, organizing, staffing and human resource management, leading and influencing, and controlling.

Extension administrators have many job responsibilities in addition to management. Their ability to motivate and influence are essential characteristics for day to day operations and programming. A study by Feife and Schyns (2004) examined the leadership styles of 213 supervisors and their superiors. In the study, when the supervisors perceived their superiors as successful, they were more inclined to adopt their leadership styles. The research suggests that Extension administrators who demonstrate collaborating and partnering at the state level may influence agents to emulate their behavior at the county level.

Nationally, Extension programs experience high turnover rates amongst extension agents. Agents expressed low salaries, downsizing, workload, stress, and burnout as reasons attributing to the high turnover. Because many of the factors can't be controlled, administrators can encourage agents to partner with other agents to ease their workload and recognize counties that have strong partnerships between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program for other counties to model.

Summary

The literature review provided a brief overview of research related to national and state partnerships. Although limited research is available pertaining to 1862 and 1890 agent partnerships, the researcher used National Extension partnerships, and Texas Extension research to build the literature review. Transformational leadership, administrative influences and communication articles were included to emphasize their importance in the Texas Extension Program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, selection of participants, instrument description, data collection and analysis. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used a descriptive research design to examine the extension agents' perception of the Texas Extension partnership. In order to accomplish set objectives, subjects were asked quantitative questions pertaining to the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program. Agents were asked their understanding of the partnership, their willingness to partner at the county level and their familiarity and utilization of the Operational Guidelines as a county resource. Open-ended questions allowed agents opportunities to provide their perceived strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of having two State Extension programs. Additionally recommendations also were provided to administration on how to improve the partnership at the county level.

Background

The current partnership has existed since 1977, as outlined in the 1977 Memorandum of Agreement between the two Extension programs with modifications made in the early 1980s. The results of the study will strengthen the partnership and cooperative

relationship of agents at the county level, resulting in enhanced program delivery and services to their specific clientele.

A review of literature on the subject of the 1890 and 1862 partnerships in the United States revealed limited research referencing the cooperative relationships of agents from 1862 and 1890 Extension programs and how they function at the county level. Many articles addressed collaborative efforts by1862 and 1890 Extension programs. Some research focused on Extension partnerships with external agencies, while few examined the direct partnership from the perspective of the agents at the county level.

A study by Willis (1991) examined Texas AgriLife Extension Service (formerly Texas Agricultural Extension Service) personnel's perception of the Cooperative Extension Program. The subjects in the study were County Extension Agents, Specialists and District Administrators. At the time that this research was conducted, the majority of the Cooperative Extension Program staff was Program Aides, supervised by 1862 staff. Twenty years later, the majority of the Cooperative Extension Program county staff members are agents. The following objectives were identified for the study:

1. Determine the demographics of the subjects who participated in the study.
2. Examine agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
3. Examine agents' perception of the relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program.

4. Determine agents' knowledge of the Operational Guidelines as a resource for understanding how the partnership works.
5. Determine agents' understanding of the existing partnership between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program.
6. Examine agents' willingness to partner and collaborate on programs when possible to serve the citizens of the State of Texas.
7. Determine the agents' perceived strengths of having two Extension programs in Texas.
8. Determine the agents' perceived weaknesses of having two Extension programs in Texas.
9. Determine agents' perception of opportunities in having two Extension programs in the state of Texas.
10. Determine agents' recommendations to administration for strengthening the partnership and working relationship of agents at the county level.

Population

Texas AgriLife Extension Service has a day to day presence in all 254 counties; whereas the Cooperative Extension Program has a presence in 24 Texas counties. The target population for the study included Extension agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service of Texas A&M University and Cooperative Extension Program of Prairie View A&M University, who work in 23 counties, where both services are

available to citizens. Burleson County was omitted from the study, because the CEP-PVAMU staff person in the county is a paraprofessional supervised by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service county agent. The target population for the study was 125 agents of which 95 were employed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and 30 employed by the Cooperative Extension Program. Two invitational emails were undeliverable due to a resignation and retirement and the individuals did not complete the survey.

Table 1 provides a listing of Texas county offices that met the criteria for the research. Agents from these counties were invited to complete the survey. The counties are both urban and rural counties as defined by Texas AgriLife Extension Service. According to Dr. Darrell Dromgoole, Associate Director of Texas AgriLife Extension, on March 2, 2011, "Urban designation is limited to the state's most populated urban centers of Dallas, Tarrant, Harris, Bexar, Travis, El Paso and Fort Bend Counties. Other factors that contribute to a county being identified as urban include having a County Extension Director who provides personnel management, programmatic oversight and fiscal management; and faculty who provide leadership in a variety of subject matter areas."

Table 1
Texas Counties with Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program –PVAMU Agents

Bell	Cherokee	Grimes	Nacogdoches	Waller
Bexar	Dallas	Harris	Smith	Washington
Bowie	El Paso	Hidalgo	Starr	Wharton
**Burleson	Falls	Jefferson	Tarrant	Webb
Cass	Fort Bend	Marion	Travis	

Note. ** County eliminated because CEP-PVAMU staff person is not an agent

Protection of Human Subjects

The Institutional Review Board of Texas A&M University approved the research. Individuals received an email describing the research project and requesting their completion of the survey. Informed Consent was provided by the agents' completion of the survey. Participants were informed that if, at any point, they were uncomfortable answering questions, they could stop. This information was contained in both the email from the researcher as well as in the instructions on the survey.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a 52-item instrument to conduct the study. The instrument sought to examine each subject's individual understanding of the Texas Extension partnership, relevance of the two programs and willingness to partner at the county level and knowledge of the Operational Guidelines. The instrument included seven sections totaling the 52 questions. A 5 point Likert type Scale was used to gather agents' responses. The responses ranges were: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) neither Agree nor Disagree; (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree.

The first section contained seven questions, as shown in Table 2, and gathered information pertaining to the agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service. The researcher wanted to determine if agents perceived Texas AgriLife Extension Service as relevant in providing quality educational programs, resources and meeting its mission of "improving the lives of people, businesses and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education" (Willis & Fehlis, 2003, p. 4) .

Table 2
Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Perception of the Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service Items

Items
Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational programs.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational resources to clientele.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are assets to the communities they serve.
The mission of Texas AgriLife Extension Service is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are meeting the agency's mission in serving the target audience.

Table 3 provides a listing of the questions pertaining to agents' perception of the relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program - Prairie View A&M University. Agents were asked if the Cooperative Extension Program was achieving its mission of "delivering research-based information and informal educational opportunities focused on identified issues and needs to Texans of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, giving primary emphasis to individuals with limited resources" (Willis & Fehlis, 2003, p. 4).

Table 3
Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Perception of the Relevance of Cooperative Extension Program - PVAMU Items

Items
Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational programs.
Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational resources to clientele.
Cooperative Extension Program enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.
Cooperative Extension Program is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.
Cooperative Extension Program agents are assets to the communities they serve.
The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.
Cooperative Extension Program agents are meeting the agency's mission in serving their target audience.

The third section, Table 4, addressed questions about the partnership between the Texas Extension from the agents' perspective. Agents were asked if they valued the partnership, understood the partnership, and if competition existed between the programs. Other questions were related to the need to maintain individual agency identities; additional training needs to understand the partnership and the administrations' influence on the partnership.

Table 4
Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Understanding of the Texas Extension Partnership Items

Items
I value the contributions of both Extension programs in the state of Texas.
More training is needed for agents from both extension programs to strengthen the partnership.
Agents are encouraged by Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Administration to partner in local programming.
Agents are encouraged by the Cooperative Extension Program's Administration to partner in local programming
I understand the partnership between the two Extension programs.
I understand the need for both Extension programs in the state of Texas.
I need help understanding the partnership.
Agents should receive more background information about the partnership.
Agents from my county are willing to partner.
There is a sense of competition that exists between Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents and Cooperative Extension Program agents in my county.
Agents compete for groups to conduct programs.
Both organizations work hard to maintain their individual identity.
It is important for both agencies to remain visible for funding purposes.
It is important for both agencies to remain independent.
Trainings that include agents from both organizations should include both Extension logos.
When agents partner on programming, both Extension logos should be present.
I feel included at extension professional development trainings and programs.

The fourth section addressed agents' familiarity with the Operational Guidelines. The Operational Guidelines were revised in 2003 that outlined the partnership, supervision and administrative responsibilities in counties where both programs were present. The three questions for this section are listed in Table 5, and simply asked if agents were familiar with the document, and if it is used as a source of reference in their county.

Table 5
Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Knowledge of the Texas Extension Operational Guidelines Items

Items
I am familiar with the Texas Extension Operational Guidelines.
The Operational Guidelines provide enough information to understand the partnership.
The Operational Guidelines is a reference document used in my county.

Table 6 identifies seven questions from the fifth section of the instrument. The questions in this section pertained to agents' willingness to partner, administrations' influence on the partnership, and if more assistance was needed on how programmatic collaborations could be implemented at the county level.

Table 6
Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Willingness to Partner Items

Items
I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the partnering extension service.
I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the extension service that I am employed.
I seek opportunities to partner with agents from within the extension program that I am employed.
I seek opportunities to partner with agents from the partnering extension program.
It is the agents' responsibility to seek opportunities to partner.
It is the responsibility of the administration from both Extension Programs to seek opportunities for agents to partner.
Agents should receive information and training on how to collaborate on Extension programming.

The sixth section collected data to determine demographics of participants, including gender, age, and ethnicity. Extension related questions addressed the program of employment (Texas AgriLife Extension Service or Cooperative Extension Program), rural or urban county, and length of employment. Subjects also were asked to identify the Extension program area that the majority of their programming was conducted, with selections of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, Community and Economic Development, or 4-H and Youth Development.

The seventh section included four open-ended questions that allowed agents an opportunity to provide perceived strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of having two

Extension programs. Agents also were allowed an opportunity to provide recommendations to the administration of both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program for strengthening the partnership and working relationship between the two.

Validity

Five constructs were determined for the study: Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University, Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines as a Resource, Understanding of the Partnership and Willingness to Partner. Construct Validity was obtained by a group of faculty from Texas Tech and Texas A&M to ensure survey items matched the objectives.

According to Tuckman (1999), content validity is necessary when designing an instrument for a research study. An instrument has content validity when the sample of situations or performances it measures is representative of the set from which the sample was drawn. By achieving content validity, the researcher is able to generalize the findings to the total population. Recommendation and changes were obtained from Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University committee members, along with Extension administrators to acquire face and content validity. The instrument previously was piloted with a small sample of agents from both Extension programs in a research

class. Agents and faculty provided feedback and made recommendations to support the instrument.

Lindner, Murphy and Briers (2001) determined that non-response error can be addressed by comparing early to late respondents or by comparing respondents with non-respondents by sampling non-respondents if more than 20 can be obtained. The researcher compared early to late respondents for this study. Respondents were not compared to non-respondents because the instrument was distributed on Instant Survey and responses were provided anonymously.

Reliability Analysis

Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the researcher analyzed 41 quantitative items on the survey to determine reliability. The results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of .91, which suggests the instrument is reliable. Reliability as defined by Joppe (2000) is:

> …The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. (p. 1)

The survey questions then were divided to address the five constructs identified as part of the study. The first construct, Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service included seven questions and yielded a coefficient of .92. The second construct,

Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program yielded a coefficient of .96. The Operational Guidelines construct yielded a coefficient of .75. The remaining constructs of Agents understanding of the partnership and Willingness to partner yielded coefficients of .76. A reliability coefficient of .70 is acceptable according to Nunnaly (1978), and all coefficients previously stated were above .70. Table 7 provides an illustrative view of the results from the Reliability Analysis.

Table 7
Reliability of Texas Extension Partnership Survey and Constructs

Item	Questions (n)	Cronbach's Alpha
All Questions	41	.91
Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program	7	.96
Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service	7	.92
Understanding of the partnership	17	.76
Willingness to partner and collaborate on programs	7	.76
Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines	3	.75

Data Collection

The researcher used the survey design and data collection method as outlined by Dillman (2000). A web based instrument was used for data collection because of the nature and sensitivity of the study. The researcher was inclined to believe the number and willingness of subjects would increase because individual responses could not be traced back to individuals or email addresses. The software selected to develop the instrument was Instant Survey. Instant Survey was the system available to the researcher through Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Instant Survey is an online software system that offers subjects confidential access to complete surveys. It utilizes Secure Socket Layers to ensure high levels of security for anonymity and confidentiality. Instant Survey is a member of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and adheres to CASRO's Code of Standards and Ethics for Survey Research for data and personal information, collection, storage and dissemination. As data were received into Instant Survey to be analyzed, the respondents were assigned ID numbers that were unique to the response and not the individual respondent. Only the ID number was imported in SPSS.

The 2010 Texas AgriLife Extension Service Personnel Directory was used to identify 125 agents to be included in the study as well as to obtain email addresses. The initial recruitment strategy included an email message from the researcher to the agents inviting them to complete a confidential online survey (Appendix F). An email was sent

from Instant Survey with the link and a descriptive introduction from the researcher asking for participation in the study.

In addition to the invitational email and Instant Survey email, letters obtained from both Mr. Kyle Smith, Executive Associate Director, Texas AgriLife Extension Service (Appendix D) and Dr. Freddie Richards, Dean/Extension Administrator of the Cooperative Extension Program (Appendix E) were emailed to agents encouraging them to complete the survey. Two weeks following the initial email, a reminder was sent to agents asking them to complete the survey if they had not and thanking those who had completed it.

The first attempt yielded an 11% (N=14) response rate; the second attempt yielded an additional 34% (N=42) completed surveys; and the third attempt yielded an additional 18% (N=22) completed surveys resulting in a total of 63% (N=78). Thirty-seven percent (N=45) of the 123 invited subjects did not complete the survey.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Program version 15. Survey responses were coded to correspond with the responses from the survey instrument's Likert type Scale, (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree. Frequencies and measures of central tendency were calculated. Cohen's *D* effect size was used to determine significance and address objectives of the study. Cohen's *D* effect size measures the magnitude of the practical significance of the difference between two independent means and identifies a difference between the two. The standard interpretation offered by Cohen (1988) is .8 (8/10) = large, .5 (1/2) = moderate and .2 (1/5) = small (UCCS, 2011).

The instrument contained four open-ended questions to determine agents' perceived strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of having two Extension Programs in the State. Another question allowed agents to express recommendations they considered would strengthen the partnership at the county level. Similar responses were combined to formulate a theme. Items were counted to determine frequency and percentages. Responses that did not identify with a theme were placed in the "other" category.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine the Texas Extension Partnership from the agents' perspective. The partnership involves Texas AgriLife Extension Service headquartered on the campus of Texas A&M University and the Cooperative Extension Program headquartered on the campus of Prairie View A&M University. The study focused on the agents who work in counties where both programs are present.

It examined the agents' perception of the relevance of both programs, their understanding of the partnership, and willingness to partner in programming at the county level. Agents completed four open-ended questions to address their perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for having two Extension programs in the state of Texas. Recommendations were suggested to administration for improving the partnership at the county level.

Non-Response Error

Agents were asked to complete the survey via an email invitation that included a link to the survey. The preliminaries of participants' confidentiality and anonymity were included in both the invitational email and the emailed survey. Emailed letters from Kyle Smith, Executive Associate Director, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Dr.

Freddie Richards, Dean/Administrator of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University, asked and encouraged agents to participate in the online survey.

After two weeks of the survey distribution, 56 (45%) surveys were completed and 12 surveys were partially completed. A follow-up email was sent to all agents thanking those who took the time to complete the survey and reminding others of its availability and extended the deadline for completion. Following the two-week extension, an additional 22 responses and 6 partials were completed. The total number of respondents was 78 (62%), (63% of the Cooperative Extension Program agents' responded and 60% of the AgriLife Agents responded). Two respondents did not designate their Extension Program of employment.

Descriptive Statistics-Demographics

Research Objective 1 was to determine the demographics of the participants of the study. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using SPSS to determine demographic data of the subjects of the research. The total population for the study was 125 agents, of which 95 were employed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and 30 employed by the Cooperative Extension Program. Two email addresses were undeliverable and an email was sent to the researcher, due to a resignation and a retirement of the staff members. A total of 78 staff members completed the survey. As depicted in Figure 4, 73% (N=57) were employed by Texas AgriLife Extension and 24% *(*N=19*)* were employed by the

Cooperative Extension Program. The remaining 3% (N=2) did not specify an Extension program of employment.

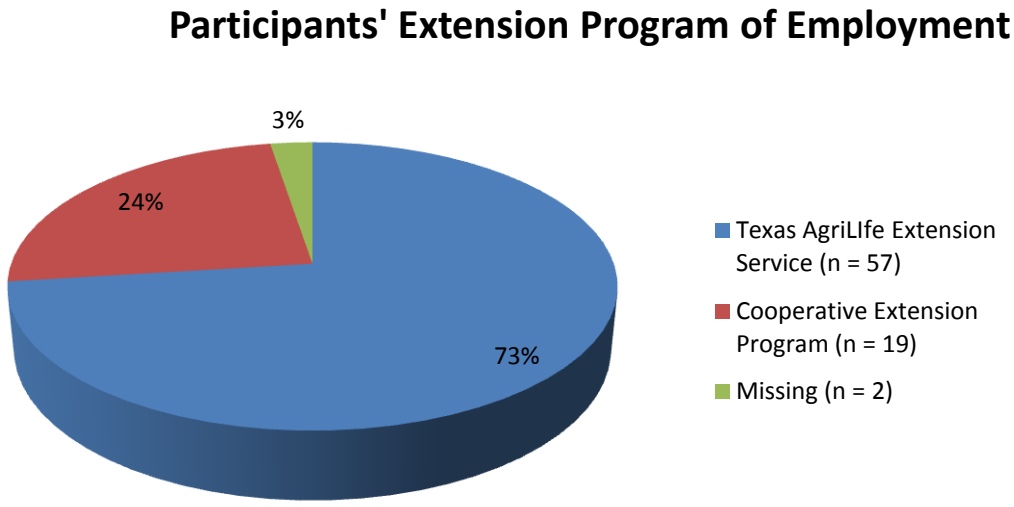

Figure 5. Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Agents by Extension Program of Employment.

Participants were asked to identify years of employment from selections of less than one year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years and 31 or more years. Figure 5 indicates five (6.4%) selected less than a year, 21 (26.9%) selected 1-5 years, 18 (23.1%) selected 6-10 years, 13 (16.7%) selected 11-15 years, six (7.7%) selected 16-20 years, two (2.6%) selected 21-25 years, four (5.1%) selected 26-30 years and 5 (6.4%) selected 31 or more years. Four (5.1%) provided no selection for this question.

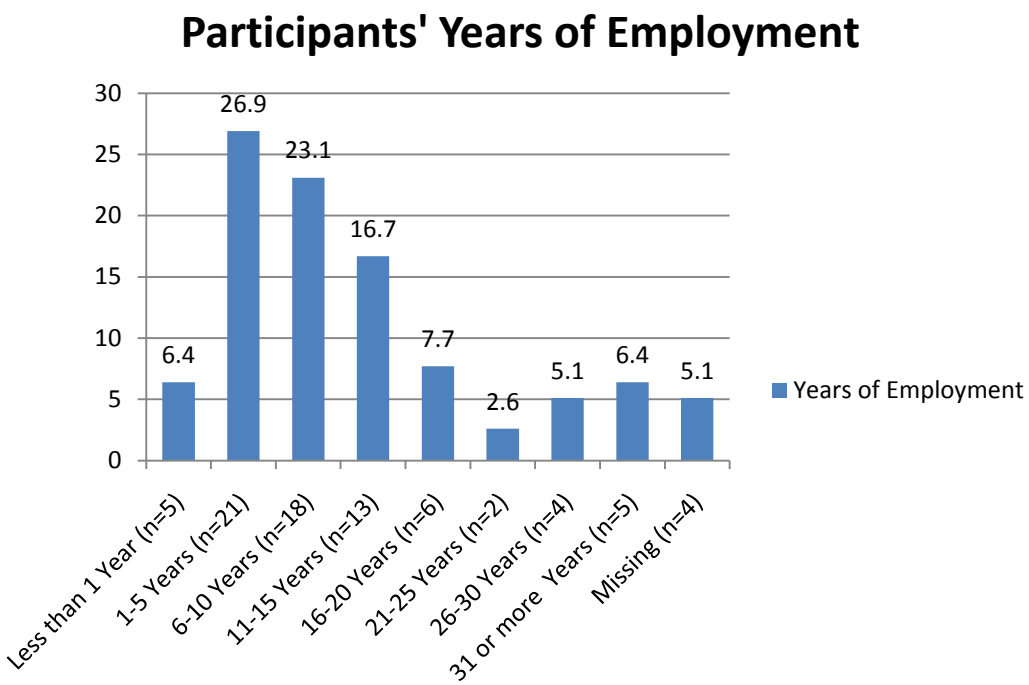

Figure 6. Cooperative Extension Program and Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents (N=78) by years of employment.

Participants were asked to select their age group, with selections of 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60 and 61 years and over. Data from Figure 6 indicate four (5.1%) selected 21-25, 10 (12.8%) selected 26-30, 11 (14.1%) selected 31-35, eight (10.3%) selected 36-40, 12 (15.4%) selected 41-45, six (7.7%) selected 46-50, nine (11.5%) selected (51-55), eight (10.3%) selected 56-60, and six (7.7%) selected 61 and over. An additional four (5.1%) did not make a selection.

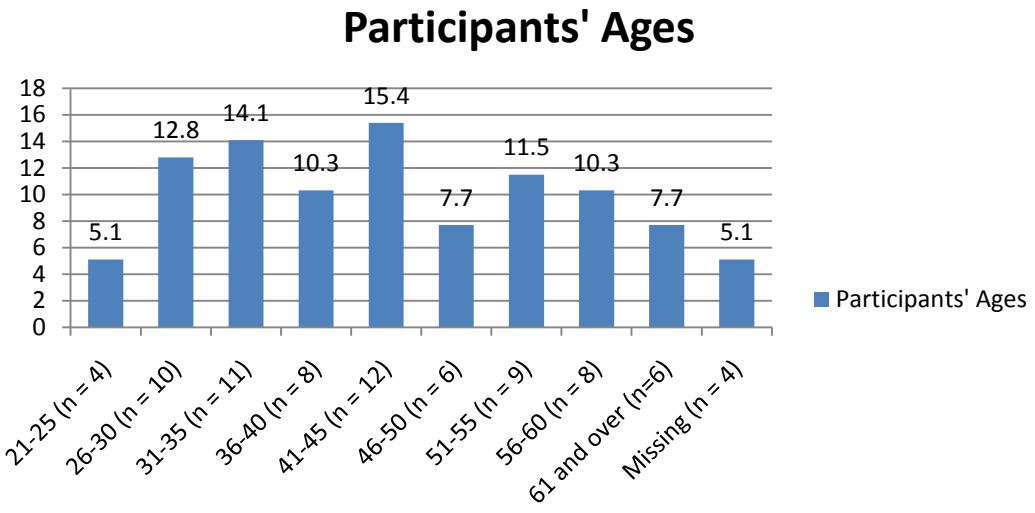

Figure 7. Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Ages.

Table 8 describes the ethnicity of the study's participants. Of the 78 participants, 34 (43.6%) were Caucasian, 24 (30.8%) African-American, seven (9%) Hispanics and one (1.3%) Native-American. An additional six (7.7%) selected other and six (7.7%) did not specify ethnicity. Females made up 41 (53%) of the participants and 33 (42%) of the participants were males. The remaining four (5%) did not specify gender.

Table 8
Ethnicity and Gender of Cooperative Extension Program- PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N = 78)

Characteristic	Frequency *n*	Frequency Percent %	Mode
Ethnicity			Caucasian
African-American	24	30.8	
Caucasian	34	43.6	
Hispanic	7	9	
Native American	1	1.3	
Other	6	7.7	
Missing	6	7.7	
Gender			Female
Female	41	52.6	
Male	33	42.3	
Missing	4	5.1	

Extension agents conduct educational programming in four areas to include Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H & Youth Development and Community and Economic Development. Although many agents may conduct programs in more than one program area, participants were asked to select the program area that the majority of their programming occurred. The largest group of agents participating in the research project was Agriculture and Natural Resources agents that represented 37.2% (N=29). Twenty-six (33%) were Family and Consumer Sciences agents, 18 (23.1%) were 4-H & Youth Development agents and one (1.3%) agent was a Community and Economic Development Agent. An additional four (5.1%) participants did not specify a program area (Table 9).

The majority of the participants, 60.3 % (N=47), identified their county profile as urban, while 27 (34.6%) identified their county as rural. An additional four (5.1%) did not identify a county profile.

Table 9
Cooperative Extension Program- PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Program Areas and County Profiles (N = 78)

Characteristic	Frequency *n*	Frequency Percent %	Mode
Program Area			Agriculture & Natural Resources
Agriculture & Natural Resources	29	37.2	
Family & Consumer Sciences	26	33.3	
4-H & Youth Development	18	23.1	
Community & Economic Development	1	1.3	
Missing	4	5.1	
County Profile			Urban
Urban	47	60.3	
Rural	27	34.6	
Missing	4	5.1	

Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Research Objective 2: Examine agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service (TAES).

The study sought to determine agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service (TAES). The researcher provided data frequency and percentage distributions for the statements contained in the construct (Table 10). Responses were gathered utilizing a Likert Type Scale, with selections of (1) strongly disagree; (2) disagree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.

According to data contained in Table 10, the majority of the agents strongly agreed that TAES provides quality educational programs and resources to clientele, the agency as well as the agency's mission remain relevant, agents are assets to communities and enhance the quality of life for the citizens.

Table 10
Data Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Responses to Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service Scaled Items by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents

Item	SD		D		ND or A		A		SA		Missing
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*
TAES provides quality educational programs					1	1.3	29	37.2	48	61.5	0
TAES provides quality educational resources					2	20.6	30	38.5	46	59.0	0
TAES enhances citizens quality of life					6	7.7	30	38.5	42	53.5	
TAES' agents are assets	2	2.6			4	5.1	32	41.0	40	51.3	
TAES' mission is relevant	1	1.3			5	6.4	33	42.3	39	50	
TAESs remains relevant	4	1.3	8	10.3	15	19.2	25	32.1	29	37.2	
TAES agents are meeting its mission	1	1.3	3	3.8	12	15.4	36	46.2	26	33.3	

Mean scores of statements provided to determine the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service (TAES) are depicted in Table 11. Information gathered suggests agents agreed that TAES provides quality educational programs and resources, enhances the quality of life for citizens, are assets to communities they serve and are meeting the agency's mission. While agents agreed that the mission remains relevant, they were indifferent as to the agency being as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.

Table 11
Mean Score of Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service as Perceived by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N = 78)

Items	*M*	*SD*
Texas AgriLife Extension provides quality educational programs.	4.60	.52
Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational resources to clientele.	4.56	.55
Texas AgriLife Extension Service enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.	4.46	.64
Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are assets to the communities they serve.	4.41	.72
The mission of Texas AgriLife Extension Service is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.	4.41	.67
Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are meeting the agency's mission in serving the target audience.	4.06	.87
Texas AgriLife Extension Service is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.	3.94	1.04

The researcher set parameters for determining relevance of the summated scores. The parameters were 1 (very low); 2 (low); 3 (moderate); 4 (high); and 5 (very high). A summated score ($M = 4.35$) of the construct indicated there is a high degree of relevance for Texas AgriLife Extension Service amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program (Table 12).

Table 12
Summated Score of Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents

N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
78	2.57	5.00	4.35	.60

Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU

Research Objective 2: Examine agents' perception of the relevance of Cooperative Extension Program –Prairie View A&M University (CEP-PVAMU).

To determine the agents' perception of the relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University (CEP-PVAMU), the researcher examined a set of independent statements pertinent to the program. Responses also were gathered utilizing the following Likert Type Scale with selections of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree.

Table 13 represents the data frequency and percentage distributions for statements contained within the construct. Frequency distributions and percentages (Table 13) indicate the majority of the agents agreed CEP-PVAMU enhances citizens quality of life, provides quality educational programs and resources and agents are assets to the communities served. The largest percent of the agents were indifferent about CEP-PVAMU remaining relevant today as it way 30 years ago; however, the majority indicated that the agents are meeting the agency's mission, and the agency's mission is relevant.

Table 13
Data Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Responses to Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU Scaled Items by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N=78)

Item	SD		D		ND or A		A		SA		Missing
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
CEP enhances citizens quality of life	5	6.4			15	19.2	32	41.0	25	32.1	1
CEP provides quality educational programs	1	1.3	5	6.4	15	19.2	32	41.0	24	30.8	1
CEP's agents are assets	4	5.1	5	6.4	16	20.5	28	35.9	23	29.5	2
CEP's mission is relevant	3	3.8	4	5.1	16	20.5	32	41.0	22	28.2	1
CEP provides quality educational resources	1	1.3	6	7.7	19	24.4	31	39.7	20	25.6	1
CEP remains relevant	3	3.8	12	15.4	24	30.8	21	26.9	17	21.8	1
CEP's agents are meeting its' mission	6	7.7	7	9.0	16	20.5	31	39.7	17	21.8	1

Mean scores of statements provided to determine the relevance of CEP-PVAMU are provided in Table 14. Information presented suggests that all agents agreed that CEP-PVAMU enhances the quality of life for the citizens, while they were indifferent in rating the remaining six statements specific to CEP-PVAMU.

Table 14
Mean Scores of Relevance of Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU as Perceived by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N = 78)

Items	*M*	*SD*
Cooperative Extension Program enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.	4.00	.89
Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational programs.	3.95	.94
The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.	3.86	1.01
Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational resources to clientele.	3.82	.96
Cooperative Extension Program agents are assets to the communities they serve.	3.80	1.11
Cooperative Extension Program agents are meeting the mission in serving their target audience.	3.60	1.16
Cooperative Extension Program is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.	3.48	1.12

The researcher set parameters for determining relevance of the CEP-PVAMU. The parameters were 1 (very low), 2 (low), 3 (moderate), 4 (high), and 5 (very high). A summated score ($M = 3.78$) of the construct indicated a moderate degree of relevance for CEP-PVAMU amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program (Table 15).

Table 15
Summated Score of Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents

N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
77	1.29	5.00	3.78	.93

Table 16 summarizes the mean scores of agents' perceptions of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service by Extension program. Agents agreed on the statements relative to the quality of education programs and resources, TAES ability for enhancing the quality of life for citizens and the relevance of TAES mission. Differences appear to exist amongst the mean scores of statements relative to TAES as assets to their communities, agents meeting the agency's mission and TAES being as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.

Among agents from Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View, a statistically significant difference existed in perception in relation to relevance of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service (Table 17). Cohen's effect size value (d=.82) suggests a large practical difference in the perception of TAES amongst agents from the two programs.

Table 16
Mean Scores of Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Perception of Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service by Extension Program (N=78)

	1862		1890	
Item	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Texas AgriLife Extension provides quality educational programs.	4.72	.45	4.32	.58
Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational resources to clientele.	4.68	.49	4.26	.65
Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are assets to the communities they serve.	4.58	.53	3.95	.97
Texas AgriLife Extension Service enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.	4.56	.60	4.21	.71
The mission of Texas AgriLife Extension Service is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.	4.53	.66	4.11	.66
Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are meeting the agency's mission in serving the target audience.	4.21	.77	3.63	1.06
Texas AgriLife Extension Service is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.	4.18	.89	3.42	1.17

Table 17
Effect Size of the Relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N=76)

Program	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*D*	Effect Size
Texas AgriLife Extension Service	57	4.50	.504	.82**	Large
Cooperative Extension Program	19	3.99	.719		
Total	76	4.37	.602		

Note. M = mean; S.D. = standard deviation; d= Cohen's effect size; **=large effect size

Table 18 provides a summary of mean scores that depicts the agents' perception of the relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University. Agents from both programs were indifferent about CEP being as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. The remaining six statements presented different mean scores amongst agents from the two Extension programs, suggesting the CEP-PVAMU agents possess a stronger regard for their Extension program than the TAES agents.

Table 18
Mean Scores of Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Perception of the Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program – PVAMU by Extension Programs (N=78)

Items	1862		1890	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Cooperative Extension Program agents are assets to the communities they serve.	3.62	1.11	4.53	.52
Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational programs.	3.82	.94	4.47	.51
Cooperative Extension Program enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.	3.88	.92	4.47	.52
The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.	3.73	1.05	4.37	.50
Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational resources to clientele.	3.70	.91	4.31	.75
Cooperative Extension Program agents are meeting the mission in serving their target audience.	3.45	1.19	4.15	.76
Cooperative Extension Program is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.	3.45	1.11	3.73	1.10

Among agents from Texas AgriLife Extension Service (*M* = 3.66) and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View (*M* = 4.29), a statistically significant difference existed in perception in relation to relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program (Table 19). Cohen's effect size value (*d*=.84) suggests a large practical difference in the perception of the Cooperative Extension Program=PVAMU amongst agents from both Extension program.

Table 19
Effect Size of Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program –PVAMU by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (n=75)

Program	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*D*	Effect Size
Texas AgriLife Extension Service	56	3.66	.946	.84**	Large
Cooperative Extension Program	19	4.29	.482		
Total	75	3.82	.893		

Note: M = mean; S.D. = standard deviation; d= Cohen's effect size; ** = large effect size

Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines

Research Objective 4: Determine agents' knowledge of the Operational Guidelines as a resource for understanding how the partnership works.

The Operational Guidelines is a joint agreement between the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University and Texas AgriLife Extension Service that outlines coordination and supervision of agents in counties that have agents from both programs. The document contains information pertaining to office signage, recruitment and selection of Cooperative Extension Program agents. Supervisory roles, travel and leave authorization, county staff relationships, joint county program collaborations also are contained within the document.

To determine agents' familiarity and knowledge of the contents of the Operational Guidelines three statements were presented for agents to rate in a Likert Type Scale with selections of (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree; (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree. Table 20 provides a summary of the data frequency and percentage distribution for how agents responded. Forty-five percent of the agents agreed that they were familiar with the document. Thirty-eight percent of the agents were indecisive if the document provided enough information to understand the partnership and 51% were indecisive about using the document as a reference in their counties.

Table 20
Data Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Responses to Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines Scaled Items by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N=78)

Item	SD		D		ND or A		A		SA		Missing
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Familiar with the Operational Guidelines	2	2.6	15	19.2	16	20.5	40	51.3	5	6.4	0
Provides enough	4	5.1	12	15.4	38	48.7	20	15.6	3	3.8	1
Is a reference document used in my county	5	6.4	22	28.2	40	51.3	8	10.3	3	3.8	0

Mean scores of how agents from the individual Extension programs responded to statements pertinent to the Operation Guidelines are provided in Table 21. The mean scores were similar on statements about familiarity and the document as a resource; however, the CEP agents disagreed more than the TAES agents on the statement pertaining to the Operational Guidelines provide enough information to understand the partnership.

Table 21
Mean Scores of Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N=78)

	1862		1890	
Item	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
I am familiar with the Texas Extension Operational Guidelines.	3.37	.99	3.53	.84
The Operational Guidelines provide enough information to understand the partnership.	3.23	.79	2.74	1.05
The Operational Guidelines is a reference document used in my county.	2.82	.85	2.68	.95

The researcher set parameters for determining agents' knowledge of the Operational Guidelines. The parameters were set at 1 (very low), 2 (low), 3 (moderate), 4 (high), and 5 (very high). A summated score (M=3.06) for the three items included in the construct indicated a moderate degree of knowledge of the Operational Guidelines amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program (Table 22).

Table 22
Summated Score of Knowledge of the Operational Guidelines by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents

N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
78	1.00	5.00	3.08	.74

Among agents from Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View, a statistically significant difference existed in relation to knowledge of the Operational Guidelines. Cohen's effect size value (*d*=.21) suggests a small practical difference in the knowledge of the document amongst agents from the two programs (Table 23).

Table 23
Effect Size of Relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Knowledge of Operational Guidelines (N=76)

Program	N	M	S.D.	*D*	Effect Size
Texas AgriLife Extension Service	57	3.14	.724	.21	Small
Cooperative Extension Program	19	2.98	.774		
Total	76	3.10	.735		

Note: M=mean; S.D = standard deviation; *d*= Cohen's effect size; ** =large effect size

Understanding of the Partnership

Research Objective 5: Determine agents' understanding of the partnership.

The fifth objective sought to determine the agents' understanding of the partnership between the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program. Agents were asked to rate their perception of a series of statements utilizing a Likert Scale with selections of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree. Table 24 provides a summary of data frequency and percentage distribution for how agents responded.

A large number of agents strongly agreed:

- They valued the contributions of both programs
- More background information is needed to understand the partnership
- Need for visibility of both Extension programs for funding purposes
- Presence of both logos on training material and when partnering on program occurs.
- More training is needed to understand the partnership
- Agents are encouraged by the administration of both programs to partner
- They understand the partnership and the need for both programs
- Agents from their county are willing to partner
- Programs must work to maintain their identity
- Agents feel included at trainings.

Table 24
Data Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Responses to Understanding of the Partnership Scaled Items by CEP-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents

Item	SD		D		ND or A		A		SA		Missing
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Value contributions of both programs	1	1.3	10	12.8	12	15.4	25	32.1	28	35.9	1
More training is needed	4	5.1	7	9.0	9	11.5	29	37.2	28	35.9	1
Encouraged by TAEX admin. to partner	2	2.6	10	12.8	11	14.1	31	39.7	24	30.8	1
Encouraged by CEP admin. to partner	5	6.4	13	16.7	22	28.2	30	38.5	8	10.3	0
Understand the Texas Extension partnership	6	7.7	11	14.1	13	16.7	33	42.3	15	19.2	0
Understand the need for both programs	8	10.3	15	19.2	12	15.4	26	33.3	17	21.8	0
Need help to understand the partnership	9	11.5	16	20.5	24	30.8	15	19.2	12	15.4	2
Agents need more background information	2	2.6	9	11.5	14	17.9	26	33.3	26	33.3	1
Agents from my county are willing to partner	3	3.8	9	11.5	15	19.2	28	35.9	19	24.4	4
Competition amongst agents in my county	10	12.8	20	25.6	18	23.1	17	21.8	13	16.7	0
Agents compete for groups	10	12.8	26	33.3	19	24.4	14	17.9	9	11.5	0
Programs work to maintain identity	2	2.6	8	10.3	18	23.1	29	37.2	21	26.9	0
Visibility for funding	3	3.8	5	6.4	17	21.8	26	33.3	27	34.6	0
Agencies remain independent	11	14.1	14	17.9	27	34.6	15	19.2	10	12.8	1
Trainings should include both Program's logos	2	2.6	2	2.6	13	16.7	29	37.2	32	41.0	0
Both logos present when agents partner	2	2.6	1	1.3	5	6.4	33	42.3	37	47.4	0
Feel included at programs and trainings	4	5.1	8	10.3	14	17.9	31	39.7	21	26.9	0

Table 25 provides mean scores of both TAES Agents and CEP Agents of how they responded to the statements related to their understanding of the partnership. Visual differences existed in 12 of the 17 statements. Agents agreed that when they partner on programs, both logos should be present and their individual program of employment encouraged them to partner.

The Cooperative Extension Program agents rated the following higher than Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents:

- Trainings that include agents from both programs should include both logos
- Value the contributions of both Extension Programs
- Willingness to partner
- Need for more training to strengthen the partnership
- Visibility of both agencies for funding purposes
- Need for more background information about the partnership
- Extension programs work hard to maintain individual identities
- The need for both Extension programs
- Competition exists between the agents from the partnering Extension program
- Agents compete for groups
- The importance for both programs to remain independent

Table 25
Mean Scores of Understanding of the Partnership Items by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N=76)

Items	1862		1890	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
When agents partner on programming, both Extension logos should be present.	4.16	.80	4.89	.32
Agents are encouraged by Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Administration to partner in local programming.	4.04	.93	3.21	1.36
I feel included at extension professional development trainings and programs.	3.96	.99	3.11	1.29
Trainings that include agents from both organizations should include both Extension logos.	3.89	.88	4.89	.32
I value the contributions of both Extension programs in the state of Texas.	3.82	1.09	4.26	.99
Agents from my county are willing to partner.	3.69	1.08	3.82	1.19
More training is needed for agents from both extension programs to strengthen the partnership.	3.68	1.22	4.63	.50
It is important for both agencies to remain visible for funding purposes.	3.66	1.09	4.63	.60
Agents should receive more background information about the partnership.	3.57	1.13	4.63	.60
I understand the partnership between the two Extension programs.	3.56	1.15	3.58	1.17
Both organizations work hard to maintain their individual identity.	3.56	.98	4.37	.96
I understand the need for both Extension programs in the state of Texas.	3.12	1.30	4.21	.85
Agents are encouraged by the Cooperative Extension Program's Administration to partner in local programming.	3.03	1.03	4.11	.74
I need help understanding the partnership	3.00	1.24	3.22	1.31
There is a sense of competition that exists between Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents and Cooperative Extension Program agents in my county.	2.82	1.24	3.57	1.34
Agents compete for groups to conduct programs.	2.74	1.20	3.16	1.26
It is important for both agencies to remain independent.	2.68	1.13	3.95	.91

A mean score for the total construct is provided in Table 26. The researcher set parameters for determining agents' understanding of the partnership at 1 (very low), 2 (low), 3(moderate), 4(high), and 5 (very high). A summated score of the 17 items included in the construct indicated a moderate degree of understanding of the partnership exists amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program.

Table 26
Summated Score of Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agent's Understanding of the Partnership Construct

N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
78	2.47	4.65	3.59	.53

Among agents from Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View, there was a statistically significant difference in relation to agents' understanding of the partnership. Cohen's effect size value (1.29) suggests a large practical difference in the understanding of the partnership amongst agents from the two Extension programs (Table 27).

Table 27
Effect Size of Understanding of the Partnership by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (n=76)

Program	N	M	S.D.	*D*	Effect Size
Texas AgriLife Extension Service	57	3.47	.50	1.29	Large
Cooperative Extension Program	19	4.01	.326		
Total	76	3.61	.516		

Note: M = mean; S.D = standard deviation; d= Cohen's effect size; ** =large effect size

Willingness to Partner

Objective 6: Examine agents' willingness to partner and collaborate on programs when possible to serve the citizens of the State of Texas.

The sixth objective sought to determine the agents' willingness to partner and collaborate on programs. Agents were asked to rank a series of statements utilizing a Likert Type Scale with selections of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree. Table 28 provides a summary of data frequencies and percentage distribution for how agents responded.

A number of agents strongly agreed to the following statements:

- Welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from both the Extension program of employment and the partnering program
- Seek opportunities to partner with agents from both the Extension program of employment and the partnering program
- It is both the agent's responsibility and the administration's responsibility to seek opportunities to partner
- Agents should receive information on how to collaborate

Table 28
Data Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Responses by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Willingness to Partner Scaled Items (N=78)

Item	SD		D		ND or A		A		SA		Missing
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the partnering extension service			3	3.8	6	7.7	32	41.0	35	44.9	2
Welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the same service					1	1.3	31	39.7	44	56.4	2
Seek opportunities to partner with agents from within my program			1	1.3	5	6.4	31	39.7	39	50.0	2
Seek opportunities to partner with agents from the partnering program	1	1.3	7	9.0	14	17.9	27	34.6	27	34.6	2
Agents' responsibility to seek opportunities to partner			5	6.4	15	19.2	35	44.9	21	26.9	2
Administrations responsibility to seek opportunities to partner	3	3.8	10	12.8	19	24.4	30	38.5	13	16.7	3
Agents should receive information on how to collaborate	6	7.7	5	6.4	10	12.8	30	38.5	24	30.5	3

Table 29 provides mean scores of agents' willingness to partner. Agents from Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program agreed that they welcome the opportunity to collaborate on programs with agents from both their program of employment and the partnering program, and seek opportunities to partner with agents from within their Extension program of employment.

The Cooperative Extension Program agents felt stronger about it being the agents' responsibility to seek opportunities to partner with agents from both within their organization and the partnering agency and the administration of both programs should seek opportunities for agents to partner. CEP-PVAMU agents rated higher than the TAES agents on the following statements:

- It is the agents' responsibility to seek opportunities to partner
- I seek opportunities to partner with agents from the partnering extension program.
- Agents should receive information and training on how to collaborate on Extension programming
- It is the responsibility of the administration from both Extension Programs to seek opportunities for agents to partner.

Table 29
Mean Scores of Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Willingness to Partner by Extension Program

Items	1862		1890	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the extension service that I am employed.	4.52	.54	4.68	.48
I seek opportunities to partner with agents from within the extension program that I am employed.	4.38	.68	4.53	.70
I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the partnering extension service.	4.25	.79	4.58	.51
It is the agents' responsibility to seek opportunities to partner.	3.86	.82	4.16	.96
I seek opportunities to partner with agents from the partnering extension program.	3.80	.98	4.53	.70
Agents should receive information and training on how to collaborate on Extension programming.	3.62	1.22	4.53	.51
It is the responsibility of the administration from both Extension Programs to seek opportunities for agents to partner.	3.40	1.01	4.00	1.05

A summated score of the total construct is provided in Table 30. The researcher set parameters for determining agents' willingness to partner at 1 (Very low), 2 (low), 3(moderate), 4(high), and 5 (very high). A summated score of the seven items included in the construct, indicated there was a high degree of willingness to partner amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program.

Table 30
Summated Score of Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents' Willingness to Partner

N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
76	2.57	5.00	4.08	.58

Among agents from Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View, a statistically significant difference existed in relation to their willingness to partner (Table 27). Cohen's effect size value (d = 1.30) suggests a large practical difference amongst agents from the two programs and their willingness to partner.

Table 31
Effect Size of Willingness to Partner by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (n=76)

Program	N	*M*	*SD*	*d*	Effect Size
Texas AgriLife Extension Service	57	3.47	.50	1.30**	Large
Cooperative Extension Program	19	4.02	.33		
Total	76	3.61	.52		

Note: M = mean; S.D = standard deviation; d= Cohen's effect size; ** = Large effect size

As part of the study, the researcher asked four open-ended questions to determine agents' perceived strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of having two Extension Programs in the State. Another question allowed agents to express recommendations they considered would strengthen the partnership at the county level. Similar responses were combined to formulate a theme and responses that did not fit with a theme were placed in the "other" theme.

Strengths of Having Two Extension Programs in Texas

Research Objective 7: Determine the agents' perceived strengths of having two Extension programs in Texas.

The first question, "What are the strengths of having two Extension programs in the state of Texas?" obtained sixty responses (Table 32). The similar responses were grouped into five themes: (a) Extension's ability to reach new and diverse audiences, (b) not sure or no perceived strengths in having two Extension programs, (c) other, (d) Extension's ability to address community and state needs and (e) visibility. The 60 responses are as follows: 36 (60%) individuals replied that Extension's ability to reach new and diverse audiences was a strength; 14 (23.33%) either were not sure or could not identify strengths in having two programs; three (5%) individuals felt that Extension's ability to address both community and state needs of citizens were strengths; and two (3.33%) individuals expressed that having two programs allowed for more Extension

visibility. The remaining five (8.33 %) could not fit into the determined themes and were categorized as "Other."

Some of the responses provided by agents were:

- I think that each agency meets the needs of different people. The Cooperative Extension Program has an easier time working with some groups and the same goes for AgriLife Extension.
- The strength is that no stone is left unturned. All people of Texas are targeted and the education and the information that both agencies provide is available to all Texans.
- Two agencies are better than one, two agencies can reach more clientele than one. The mission of both programs can enhance the opportunity to enhance the quality of life in individuals in a county of different backgrounds, lifestyles, and financial and social status. No specific group of citizens should be underserved with two programs."

Table 32
Strengths of Having Two Extension Programs in the State as Perceived by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (n=60)

Themed Responses	Frequency	%
Extension's ability to reach new and diverse audiences	36	60
Not sure or not aware of any strengths	14	23.33
Other	5	8.33
Ability to address community and state needs	3	5
Visibility	2	3.33

Weakness of Having Two Extension Programs in Texas

Research Objective 8: Determine the agents' perceived weaknesses of having two Extension programs in Texas.

The researcher collected 73 responses for the second question (Table 33), "What are the weaknesses of having two Extension Programs in the State?" Similar responses were grouped into eight themes: (a) Two programs are competing against one another, (b) other, (c) Confusing to Clientele, (d) Lack of agents from both programs cooperating at the county level, (e) lack of coordination and supervision by the CEP's administration, (f) No comments or no identified weaknesses, (g) Duplication of services, and (h) Lack of agents understanding how to collaborate.

Response themes and the number of responses were as follows: (a)15 (20.55%) individuals identified the two programs as competing against one another for groups and program identity, (b) 14 (19.18%) responses were placed in the "Other" category, (c) 11(15.07%) individuals expressed that having two programs was confusing to clientele, (d) 10 (13.70%) identified lack of cooperation between agents at the county level, (e) 6 (8.22%) responses pertained to the lack of coordination and supervision from the Cooperative Extension Program's administration, (f) 6 (8.22%) individuals stated no comments or no identified weaknesses, (g) Duplication of services was identified by five (6.85%) individuals, and (h) four (5.48 %) agents expressed the need for more training on how to partner effectively in the county.

Some of the responses to the question were as follows:

1. Partners and participants are asked to understand a collaboration that not even agency employees fully understand.
2. It is confusing to the clientele we serve.
3. Programming efforts are often duplicated or participants of one program often get a different level of quality education than those attending programs of the other program.
4. Agents of one program also will not work with a particular audience because it doesn't fall under their mission or is not considered their target audience. This makes collaboration difficult.
5. Banner programs in Family and Consumer Sciences are duplicated making it difficult to partner because each agent wants to use their own evaluation tool for their program.
6. Lack of communication and partnership among agents and directors on both ends.
7. Lack of communication between the two agencies at the county level/
8. Competition.
9. Confusion with agents of who to answer to and when.
10. Not enough education with agents on roles of both programs.
11. Increases racial divide and disrespect between two programs.

Table 33
Weaknesses of Having Two Extension Programs in the State as Perceived by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (N=73)

Themed Responses	Frequency	%
Two programs are competing against one another	15	20.55
Other	14	19.18
Confusing to Clientele	11	15.07
Lack of agents from both programs cooperating at the county level	10	13.70
Lack of coordination and supervision by the CEP's administration	6	8.22
No comments or no identified weakness	6	8.22
Duplication of Services	5	6.85
Lack of agents understanding how to collaborate	4	5.48

Opportunities of Having Two Extension Programs in Texas

Research Objective 9: Determine the agents' perceived opportunities of having two Extension programs in Texas.

The responses to the third open-ended question, "What opportunities do you perceive in having two Extension programs in the State?" varied from limitless opportunities for the Extension partnership to merging the programs and having only one (Table 34). Similar responses were grouped into seven themes: (a) Collaborating on programs to allow for different points of view, (b) reaching diverse audiences, (c) none, (d) other, (e) more agents and services for the county, (f) visibility, (g) and funding opportunities at the county level.

Fifty seven responses were collected and are as follows: (a) 23 (40.35%) responded that opportunities exists for collaborating on programs to allow for different points of view, (b) 11 (19.30%) responded that it increases Extension's ability to reach divers audiences, (c) nine (15.79%) could not identify any opportunities, (d) seven (15.79%) responses did not fit the identified themes and were place in "other", (e) three (5.26%) stated that having more agents allowed for more services and county programs, (f) two (3.51 %) stated visibility, (g) and two (3.51 %) suggested funding opportunities.

Some responses to the questions provided by the agents are as follows:

1. The opportunities are endless if both agencies would stop pretending they are each trying to win a race. A true team doesn't win until all team members have crossed the finish line.
2. If the agencies are more diverse and efforts are made to reduce the noticeable differences between the two groups, much can be accomplished.
3. Agents need to be shown that there are no differences or perceived differences in the way they are treated, paid, represented or whatever it takes to erode the lack of trust groups feel between the system.
4. Learn from each other. Having more people in the office to work together to reach our audiences.
5. Bigger outreach and greater opportunity for diverse audiences.

Table 34
Opportunities of Having Two Extension Programs in the State as Perceived by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (n=57)

Similar Responses	Frequency	%
Collaborating on programs to allow for different points of view	23	40.35
Reaching diverse audiences	11	19.30
None	9	15.79
Other	7	12.28
More agents and services for the county	3	5.26
Visibility	2	3.51
Funding opportunities at the county level	2	3.51

Recommendations for Strengthening the Texas Extension Partnership

Research Objective 10: Determine the agents' recommendations for strengthening the partnership and working relationship between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program.

The fourth open-ended question allowed agents an opportunity to express recommendations they considered would strengthen the partnership. Fifty-six responses were collected (Table 35) and placed in seven themes: (a) more collaboration at the state level, (b) more information on how to partner, (c) better communication, (d) merge the programs, (e) collaborating on programs and curriculums, (f) clear job descriptions, (g) and make citizens the priority instead of programs.

Of the 56 responses, 18 (32.14%) stated that more collaboration was needed at the state level for replication at the county level; nine (16.07%) emphasized the need for more information and trainings for agents on how to partner effectively at the county level; nine (16.07%) stated that better communication is needed to understand how the programs are to function in the partnership; seven (12.50%) made the recommendation that the programs needed to be merged and form a Texas Extension program, instead of having two separate programs functioning as one; six (10.71%) identified that more collaborating to identify joint programs such as trainings, joint curriculums with both logos, and when program and trainings are provided having both logos on documents; five (8.93%) expressed the need for job descriptions that clearly state the roles and responsibilities of individuals in counties that have multiple agents in the same program area; and two (3.57%) individuals stated that more focus should be on the citizens, by making them the priority instead of which program will get credit.

Some responses provided by agents were as follows:

1. Focus on the needs of Texans and not the needs of the individual agency.
2. Possibly clearer outlines of job responsibilities.
3. Truly believe in the importance and value of both agencies.
4. It must begin with administration. Send a clear message to all counties of who is in charge of who, and what is expected in both programs. Create letterhead with a joint logo for use when partnering.
5. Discourage disrespect of staff in both programs.

6. Educate staff deeply on both programs at new agent orientation and yearly trainings.
7. Clear up management confusion.
8. More education on what the details of the partnership are and the expectations of both Extension programs would be extremely beneficial.
9. Have specialist in both programs to collaborate for funding to implement programs to enable and encourage Extension agents in both agencies to work together and partner more. That is the biggest drawback.

Table 35
Recommendations for Strengthening the Partnership provided by Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents (n=56)

Similar Responses	Frequency	%
More collaboration at the State level for replication at the local level	18	32.14
More information on how to partner at the county level	9	16.07
Better communication to understand how both programs function	9	16.07
Merge the programs	7	12.50
Collaborating on programs, curriculums to have both logos on documents.	6	10.71
Clear job descriptions that allow the same benefits for all agents regardless of programs to prevent competition, and duplication	5	8.93
Make the citizens the priority instead of programs	2	3.57

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the research findings, implications and recommendations. In addition to being recommendations for members of Texas Extension, the findings may assist other states with dual Extension programs and provides suggestions for future research.

Summary

Historically, the 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Acts, along with the Hatch Act and Smith- Lever Act, all contributed to the establishment of our nation's Cooperative Extension Service. The Cooperative Extension Service is comprised of the land-grant institutions throughout the United States.

A wealth of literature explored individual Land-Grant Systems and partnerships; however, a limited amount examined the partnerships of agents in states that have dual Extension Services. The purpose of this study was to examine the existing partnership amongst county agents of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program in counties where both Extension services are present. The study sought to examine (a) the agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, (b) agents' understanding of the partnership, (c) willingness to partner, and (d) knowledge of the Operational Guidelines. The study also allowed agents an

opportunity to express strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of having two Extension programs in the state, and suggest recommendations they considered would strengthen the Texas Extension partnership.

The researcher realized that no two counties function exactly alike, and individuals' background, knowledge, past and present experiences, personality, motivation and emotional state influence perception. Perception for the purpose of this study was defined as the ability to process or use information received through the sense organs (Akande, 2009). The researcher also was cognizant in realizing that land-grant systems across the country with dual state Extension programs differ. However, the results of this study may provide recommendations general enough for application throughout the state as well as the nation.

Research objectives identified for the study were as follows:

1) Determine the demographics of the subjects who participated in the study.
2) Examine agents' perception of the relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
3) Examine agent's perception of the relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University.
4) Determine agents' knowledge of the Operational Guidelines as a resource for understanding how the partnership works.
5) Determine agents' understanding of the existing partnership between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program.

6) Examine agents' willingness to partner and collaborate on programs when possible to serve the citizens of the State of Texas.
7) Determine the agents' perceived strengths of having two Extension programs in Texas.
8) Determine the agents' perceived weaknesses of having two Extension programs in Texas.
9) Determine agents' perception of opportunities in having two Extension programs in the state of Texas.
10) Determine agents' recommendations for strengthening the partnership and working relationship between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program.

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program version 15 (SPSS). Data analysis was conducted to determine descriptive statistics to include central tendency. Cohen's *D* Effect size was used to determine the statistical significance of differences between agents of Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program in constructs. Five constructs were developed to assist the researcher meet the objectives. The constructs were: (a) relevance of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, (b) relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University, (c) agents' Willingness to Partner, (d) agents' knowledge of the Operational Guideline (e) and agents' Understanding of the Texas Extension partnership.

Conclusions and Implications

Objective 1 obtained demographic data for participants. A total of 125 agents met the criteria for participation in the study. Seventy three percent were employees of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 24% were employees of the Cooperative Extension Program and 3% did not specify an Extension Service. Over half (60.3%) of the participants worked in urban counties. The Cooperative Extension Program-PVAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension Service both realize that the majority of the state's residents live in urban areas and have worked diligently to have both programs accessible to clients in the urban most populated counties of the State. The largest program area representation was the Agriculture and Natural Resource agents, which also has the largest representation amongst Texas Extension service agents. Females made up 52.6% of the participants. Caucasians represented 43.6% of the participants, followed by 30.8% African-American and 7% Hispanic.

Objective two examined agents' perception of Texas AgriLife Extension Service. A summated mean score (M= 4.35) suggests that, overall, agents from both Extension services indicated a high degree of relevance for Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Agents agreed that Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational programs and resources, enhances the quality of life for its clientele and its mission remains relevant in addressing the needs of clientele. Cohen's effect size (d =.82) suggests a large degree of difference in relation to the perception of Texas AgriLife

Extension Service amongst agents of the Cooperative Extension Program and Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Objective three examined the agents' perception of relevance of the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University. A summated mean score ($M = 3.78$) suggests agents from both programs indicated a moderate degree of relevance for the Cooperative Extension Program. Cohen's effect size ($d = .84$) suggests a large degree of difference in relation to perception of the Cooperative Extension Program amongst agents from both services.

Objectives two and three indicated significant differences on how agents perceived their individual Extension programs and the partnering Extension program. One can assume that each perceived their Extension program more relevant than their partnering program, as indicated from the mean scores and effect size. In true partnerships, both entities are valued. The effect size also suggests that the partnership needs strengthening, so that both programs are valued and perceived as relevant. The findings can be attributed to agents not understanding how the partnership functions and needing more information to understand the partnership.

Objective four obtained information about the agents' knowledge and familiarity with the Operational Guidelines as a resource for understanding how the partnership works. The Operational Guidelines is a joint agreement between the administration of both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University. The document provides information pertaining to office signage, recruitment and selection of CEP-PVAMU staff, supervisory roles, CEP agents

travel and leave authorization, county staff relationships, joint county collaboration and more. A summated mean score of (M=3.08) was calculated for the construct, indicating a moderate degree of knowledge of the Operational Guidelines amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program. Agents from both services did not agree that the document was used in their county as a reference for the partnership. Cohen's effect size (d =.21) suggests a small degree of difference in relation to knowledge of the Operational Guidelines amongst agents from both programs. The small effect size implies that agents from both Extension programs have about the same knowledge about the Operational Guidelines. The document is available, but not used readily as a reference.

Objective five sought to determine the agents' understanding of the partnership. A summated mean score of the construct (M=3.59) suggests a moderate level of understanding of the partnership amongst agents from both Extension programs. Cohen's effect size (d =1.29) suggests a large difference in relation to understanding of the partnership amongst agents of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program. Texas AgriLife Extension Agents (M =3.47) and CEP-PVAMU Agents (M = 4.01) suggests that CEP-PVAMU agents understand the partnership more than the TAES agents. Cooperative Extension Program agents rated the following statements higher than Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents:

- Trainings that include agents from both programs should include both logos
- Value the contributions of both Extension Services

- Willingness to Partner
- Need for more training to strengthen the partnership
- Visibility of both services for funding purposes
- Need for more background information about the partnership
- Extension programs work hard to maintain individual identities
- Need for both Extension services
- Competition exist between agents from partnering Extension service
- Agents compete for groups
- The importance of both services remaining independent

The sixth objective sought to determine the agents' willingness to partner and collaborate on programs. Agents agreed on statements, referencing they seek opportunities to collaborate with agents from both within their agency of employment and partnering Extension program and welcome opportunities to partner with agents from the partnering service. A summated score ($M = 4.08$) suggests that, overall, agents are willing to partner, while Cohen's effect size ($d = 1.30$) suggests a large difference in relation to willingness to partner amongst agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program.

Agents are willing to partner, but need assistance on how the partnership can work at the county level, so that everyone is valued. Although the effect size implied differences in the willingness of agents amongst the two programs, it does not imply that

all CEP-PVAMU agents are willing to partner, nor does it imply that all TAES agents aren't willing to partner.

Objective seven allowed agents to express strengths of two Extension Programs in the State. Sixty responses were provided that included: (a) Extension's ability to reach new and diverse audiences (60%), (b) 23% of the respondents could not identify or were unsure of strengths of having two Extension services, (c) the ability to address community and state needs (5%), and (d) it allows Extension to have more visibility (3.33%). An additional five comments were provided.

Research objective eight allowed agents to express weaknesses they perceived in having two Extension services in the state. Seventy- three responses were provided to this question. Agents stressed (a) the two programs are competing against one another (20.55%), (b) having two Extension programs is confusing to clientele (15.07%) and (c) lack of cooperation amongst agents at the county level (13.70%). Other items mentioned included (a) lack of coordination and supervision by the Cooperative Extension Program's administration (8.22 %), (b) no comment or no identifiable weaknesses (8.22%), (c) duplication of services provided to clientele (6.85%), and (d) lack of agents' understanding how to collaborate (5.48%).

Opportunities of having two Extension services were provided as part of Objective nine. Agents stated opportunities such as: (a) collaborating on programs to allow for different points of view (40.35%), (b) reaching diverse audiences (19.30%), (c) the ability to provide more services to the county by having more agents (5.26%), (d)

visibility (3.51%), (e) the ability to collaborate on funding opportunities at the county level (3.51%) and (f) "None" was stated by 15.79%.

Objective ten collected agent's recommendations for strengthening the partnership. Fifty-six responses were provided. Agents stated: (a) more collaboration at the State level amongst administration for replication at the county level (32.14%), (b) the need for more information on how to partner at the county level (16.07%), (c) better communication and information to understand the partnership (16.07%), (d) collaborating on programs and curriculums with the presence of both logos to demonstrate the partnership, (e) the need for clear job descriptions to prevent competition and duplication of services (8.93%), (f) making the citizens the priority instead of Extension programs (3.57 %) and (g) merging the programs to make one was expressed (12.50%).

Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following as a result of this study:

1. Administration from both Extension Services review the recommendations provided by the agents. Although the recommendations were based on individual agent perceptions, some may be general enough for application throughout the state.
    - Agents recommended more collaboration at the State level for replication at the local level.

- Agents recommended better coordination between the CEP-PVAMU and TAES administrators.
- Agents would like more information on how to partner and better communication suggest that agents want the partnership to work, but need more information on how to make it work.
- More communication is needed from the administration of both Extension programs to address supervision related issues.

2. Although state level partnerships and collaborations may exist, the information is not being shared with agents across the state or in districts that have both Programs. Sharing this information will open dialogue as to how the agents can better partner at the county level. This case was mentioned amongst Family and Consumer Science programs where opportunties may present themselves for partnering on banner programs. Banner programs that target the same audiences, but discourage sharing of resources create division amongst agents and limits collaborating.
3. Educate specialists on the roles and opportunities for partnering with the partnering program's specialist and agents.
4. In 2010 the Operational Guidelines were revised and distributed throughout the state. The document contains critical information that can be used as a reference tool for communicating how the programs function, and may open dialogue on how to enhance the partnership.

- Every agent should be informed of the information contained within the document. This can be achieved by providing trainings bi-annually at district trainings to account for new staff and the agents remain aware of the document instead of it placed on shelves and not referenced. The trainings would also allow for new staff entering the counties to become knowledgeable of the Operational Guidelines.

5. Currently the Cooperative Extension Program-Prairie View A&M University has vacant positions that are essential for the supervision of the county staff.
    - CEP-PVAMU headquarters staff should become familiar with TExAS Reporting system, job responsibilities and expectation of agents by both CEP-PVAMU and TAES.
6. Develop state-wide expectations for agents that allow accurate and consistent performance scales to measure job performance.
7. Inform all Texas Extension Program (CEP-PVAMU and TAES) faculty and staff about the partnership.
    - Agents, Specialists and associates in counties that don't have dual programs should know the partnership exists. It may offer opportunities for future collaborating on programs.
8. In addition to committees having representation from both Extension programs, organize a Texas Extension committee that meets annually to address issues and incorporate ideas on how to strengthen the partnership.

9. Recognize counties that demonstrate successful partnerships between agents of CEP-PVAMU and TAES.
10. Future research could explore correlations between demographics, years of employment, program of employment as it relates to constructs of willingness to partner and understanding of the partnership.
11. Future research can examine the administrations influence on agents partnering at the county level.
12. Replication of the study on the national level in the Southern Region states that have dual Extension programs.

In Willis (1991) unpublished dissertation titled, *Perception of the 1890 Extension Program in Texas by 1862 personnel and suggestions for improving the Cooperative Relationships between the Two Extension Organizations in Texas*, 1862 specialists, administrators and agents identified strengths, weaknesses and made recommendations for strengthening the partnership. Ironically, twenty years later, this study revealed some of the same strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. A strength identified was "Extension's ability to reach new and diverse audiences, weakness identified was "coordinating county efforts between 1890 and 1862 and recommendation was better communication.

As an agent, I feel that great strides have been made to strengthen the partnership, however more is needed. Both Extension programs have contributed to families across the state, but federal and state budget cuts may call for the programs to

collaborate and partner more in the near future. Perhaps findings from this research will help administration view ways to improve the partnership and determine areas to provide additional training. The findings suggest that agents are willing to partner, but need more help understanding how to partner.

A quote obtained from Christy & Williamson (1992, p. 53) by William Oxley Thompson stated, "The land-grant college is to be an institution that is opened for the good it can do; for the people it can serve, for the science it can promote, and for the civilization it can advance". As both Extension programs continue to enhance the quality of life for Texas as they have for over 100 years, funding and budgetary issues may require enhanced partnerships and discovering new ways of doing old things. It is Extension's responsibility to take the university to the people and become the change agent for improving lives. One agent, stated it best, "focus on the clients" and not so much on the Extension program providing the service. If the study does nothing else, it has provided a voice for Texas Extension agents that will enhance communication, collaboration and strengthen the Texas Extension partnership as noted in Figure 4.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-NOTICE EMAIL

Pre-notice Email Message

Dear (County Extension Agents and Extension Agents)

In a few days you will receive a request, via email, to complete an online survey for a research project being conducted by a doctoral candidate from both Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University.

The survey is for Extension agents who have worked or are currently working in counties that offer both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program. It will take approximately 15- 20 minutes to complete the on-line survey. The study is an important one that will examine agents' perceptions of Texas Extension related to knowledge, understanding and relevance of the partnership. Agents will also provide strengths, weakness, opportunities and recommendations related to the partnership.

I am writing you in advance because many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one that we hope will improve the Texas Extension partnership.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It's only with the generous help of people such as yourself that the research can be successful.

Sincerely,
Sonja Davis, Doctoral Candidate

Cc: Chanda Elbert, TAMU Record of Study Co-Advisory
David Lawver, TTU Record of Study Co-Advisor

APPENDIX B

CONSENT AND INVITATION 2

My name is Sonja Stueart-Davis and I am a Doctoral student in the Agricultural, Leadership, Education and Communications Department at Texas A&M University. I am conducting a research project that will examine agents' perceptions of Texas Extension related to knowledge, understanding and relevance of the partnership. Extension agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program are being asked to participate. Agents will also provide strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and recommendations related to the partnership.

You were selected because you currently work or have previously worked in a county where both Extension programs are/were present. The risks associated with this study are minimal, and are no greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey and return it to the researcher via email or mail (please use only one method for returning the instrument).

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, your input will be shared collectively with the administration from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program to enhance the existing partnership. It will take approximately 15- 20 minutes to complete the on-line survey located at http://tinyurl.com/extension-partnership. Your participation is voluntary. Should you decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time, simply stop and do not complete the survey.

This study is confidential and the information gathered will be held in the strictest confidence. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Sonja Stueart-Davis, the researcher, Chanda Elbert, research advisor, and Alvin Larke, David Lawver, Scott Burris (research Committee members) will have access to the records.

Please ensure that you have read and understand the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Sonja Stueart-Davis, 281-300-0687, sstueart@ag.tamu.edu. This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the office at 979.458.4067 or irb@tamu.edu .

Sincerely,

Sonja Stueart-Davis
Principal Research Student

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Follow-Up Email

Dear [Name}

Earlier in the week, you received a link to an online questionnaire examining agents' perceptions of Texas Extension related to knowledge, understanding and relevance of the partnership. Agents will also provide strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and recommendations related to the partnership.

If you have already completed and submitted the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If not and if possible, please take 20 minutes to complete it today. It is imperative that we receive your responses by June 20th in order to include them in the data analysis.

Your responses are very important. The survey link is here: http://tinyurl.com/extension-partnership.

We believe your opinions are valuable. Your responses are very important not only to Texas Extension, but to other states in the southern region with two Extension programs. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sonja Davis, Doctoral Candidate
Chanda Elbert, TAMU Record of Study Co-Advisory
David Lawver, TTU Record of Study Co-Advisor

APPENDIX D

TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE SUPPORT LETTER

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

May 28, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents and Cooperative Extension Program Agents

SUBJECT: Doctoral Research Study

You have been selected as an employee of Texas Extension (Texas AgriLife Extension Service or Cooperative Extension Program) to take part in a doctoral research study conducted by Sonja Stueart-Davis. The project title is: An Overview of the Texas Extension Programs: Agents' Perceptions, Understanding and Recommendations for Strengthening the Partnership. This study is being conducted through the Department of Agriculture, Leadership, Education and Communication at Texas A&M University.

Within a few days you will be receiving email notification of this research and a few days later another email will arrive with a link and specific instructions. You are not required to participate, however we encourage your support of this research project by completing the online survey. Our hope is that the results will strengthen the partnership between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program as we strive for excellence in providing educational, useful and practical information to the citizens of Texas.

Sincerely,

Kyle L. Smith
Executive Associate Director

105 Jack K. Williams Administration Building
7101 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-7101

Tel. 979.845.7907
Fax. 979.845.9542
KSmith@ag.tamu.edu
http://AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu

APPENDIX E

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM SUPPORT LETTER

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of The Texas A&M University System

May 26, 2010

To: Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agents and Cooperative Extension Program Agents

You have been selected as an employee of Texas Extension (Texas AgriLife Extension Service or Cooperative Extension Program) to take part in a doctoral research study conducted by Sonja Stueart-Davis. The project title is: An Overview of the Texas Extension Programs: Agents' Perceptions, Understanding and Recommendations for Strengthening the Partnership. This study is being conducted through the Department of Agriculture, Leadership, Education and Communication at Texas A&M University.

Within a few days you will be receiving email notification of this research and a few days later another email will arrive with a link and specific instructions. You are not required to participate, however we encourage your support of this research project by completing the online survey. Our hope is that the results will strengthen the partnership between Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program as we strive for excellence in providing educational, useful and practical information to the citizens of Texas.

Sincerely,

Freddie L. Richards, Sr. PhD
Dean/Administrator/Director
College of Agriculture & Human Sciences

College of Agriculture and Human Sciences
P.O. Box 519; MS 2000 Prairie View, Texas 77446
Phone (936) 261-2540 Fax (936) 261-2548

www.pvamu.edu

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

WE ARE TEXAS EXTENSION:

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

Cooperative Extension Program
Prairie View A&M University
Prairie View, Texas

The State of Texas has two Extension programs that provide educational programming and resources to its citizens. Both programs have unique missions to ensure that all citizens are served.

The following questionnaire is designed to gather data about the relevance, knowledge and understanding that Extension agents from both Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program perceive about the existing partnership. Your input is valuable in evaluating the partnership and providing recommendations to strengthen it.

Your input is confidential and will be used for this research only. All individual responses are confidential. No individual information about your responses will be published or disclosed. Your responses will be grouped with others and reported as grouped data.

This information is being gathered and analyzed as part of my graduate record of study. It will take you approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If at any point, you feel uncomfortable answering a question, you may stop. Please complete and return to me by June 1, 2010, via email or mail.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please contact me at 281-855-5620 or 281.300.0687. I welcome any and all comments. Thanks for your valued time in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Graduate Student
Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications
Texas A&M University
2116 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-2116

ph: 281-855-5620
fax: 281-855-5638
em: sstueart@ag.tamu.edu

Professor
Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications
Texas A&M University
2116 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-2116

ph: 979-458-2699
fax: 979-862-3000
em: celbert@tamu.edu

The mission of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service:

To improve the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education.

The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program:

To deliver research-based information and informal educational opportunities focused on identified issues and needs to Texans of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, giving primary emphasis to individuals with limited resources.

Use the following scale to indicate your response by circling the number that most represents your level of agreement or disagreement.

1=Strongly Disagree (**SD**)
2=Disagree (**D**)
3=Neither Agree or Disagree (**N**)
4=Agree (**A**)
5=Strongly Agree (**SA**)

#	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
	Texas AgriLife Extension Service					
1.	Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational programs.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Texas AgriLife Extension Service provides quality educational resources to clientele.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Texas AgriLife Extension Service enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Texas Agrilife Extension Service is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Texas Agrilife Extension Service agents are assets to the communities they serve.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The mission of Texas AgriLife Extension Service is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents are meeting the agency's mission in serving the target audience.					
	Cooperative Extension Program (CEP)					
8.	Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational programs.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Cooperative Extension Program provides quality educational resources to clientele.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Cooperative Extension Program enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Texas.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Cooperative Extension Program is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Cooperative Extension Program agents are assets to the communities they serve.	1	2	3	4	5

Use the following scales to indicate your response. Circle the best response. *Use the following scale to indicate your response by circling the number that most represents your level of agreement or disagreement.* 1=Strongly Disagree (**SD**) 2=Disagree (**D**) 3=Neither Agree or Disagree (**N**) 4=Agree (**A**) 5=Strongly Agree (**SA**)						
13.	The mission of the Cooperative Extension Program is relevant in addressing the needs of its clientele.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Cooperative Extension Program agents are meeting the mission in serving their target audience.	1	2	3	4	5
	THE PARTNERSHIP					
15.	I value the contributions of both Extension programs in the state of Texas.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	More training is needed for agents from both extension programs to strengthen the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Agents are encouraged by Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Administration to partner in local programming.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Agents are encouraged by the Cooperative Extension Program's Administration to partner in local programming.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I understand the partnership between the two Extension programs.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I understand the need for both Extension programs in the state of Texas.					
21.	I need help understanding the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Agents should receive more background information about the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Agents from my county are willing to partner.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	There is a sense of competition that exists between Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents and Cooperative Extension Program agents in my county.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Agents compete for groups to conduct programs.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Both organizations work hard to maintain their individual identity.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	It is important for both agencies to remain visible for funding purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	It is important for both agencies to remain independent.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Trainings that include agents from both organizations should include both Extension logos	1	2	3	4	5
30.	When agents partner on programming, both Extension logos should be present.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I feel included at extension professional development trainings and programs.	1	2	3	4	5

Use the following scales to indicate your response. Circle the best response.						
Use the following scale to indicate your response by circling the number that most represents your level of agreement or disagreement.		1=Strongly Disagree (**SD**) 2=Disagree (**D**) 3=Neither Agree or Disagree (**N**) 4=Agree (**A**) 5=Strongly Agree (**SA**)				
OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES						
32.	I am familiar with the Texas Extension Operational Guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	The Operational Guidelines provide enough information to understand the partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	The Operational Guidelines is a reference document used in my county.	1	2	3	4	5
WILLNESS TO PARTNER						
35.	I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the partnering extension service.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with agents from the extension service that I am employed.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I seek opportunities to partner with agents from within the extension program that I am employed.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I seek opportunities to partner with agents from the partnering extension program.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	It is the agents responsibility to seek opportunities to partner.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	It is the administration of both programs to seek opportunities to for county agents to partner.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Agents should receive information and training on how to collaborate on Extension programming.	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions by circling the most appropriate selection:

42. Gender: _____Male _____Female

43. Age:

A. 21-25 B. 26-30 C. 31-35 D.36-40 E. 41-45
F. 46-50 G.51-55 H.56-60 I. Over 60

44. Ethnicity (Select all that apply):

A. White/Non Hispanic
B. Black/African-American
C. Hispanic/Latino/Mexican
D. Native American
E. Asian or Pacific Islander
F. Other

45. Extension Program of Employment:
A. Texas AgriLife Extension Service B. Cooperative Extension Program

46. Program area that the **majority** of work is conducted:
A. Agriculture and Natural Resources
B. Community & Economic Development
C. Family & Consumer Sciences
D. 4-H & Youth Development

47. Total years of Extension Employment.
A. Less than a year
B. 1-5 years
C. 6-10 years
D. 11-15 years
E. 16-20 years
F. 21-25 years
G. 26-30 years
H. 31 or more years

48. According to the Extension profile, do you work in a rural or urban county?
A. Rural B. Urban

Read the following questions and provide as much feedback as possible.

49. What are the strengths of having two Extension programs in the state of Texas?
_____
_____

50. What are the weaknesses of having two Extension programs in Texas?
_____
_____

51. What opportunities do you perceive in having two Extension Programs in Texas?
_____
_____

52. What recommendations do you have to strengthen the partnership and the working relationship between the Texas AgriLife Extension and the Cooperative Extension Program at the county level?
_____
_____

END

THANKS FOR YOUR VALUED TIME AND HELP!

VITA

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EDUCATION

2011	Doctor of Education Texas A&M University & Texas Tech University Doctorate of Education
1996	Master of Science Prairie View A&M University Human Sciences
1994	Bachelor of Science Prairie View A&M University Home Economics

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Aug. 2009 – Present	County Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development, Texas AgriLife Extension Service- Harris County
June 2002 – Aug. 2009	Program Specialist-4-H & Youth Development Cooperative Extension Program Prairie View A&M University
June 2002-2008	Camp Activities Coordinator/Asst. Camp Director H. S. Estelle 4-H & Youth Camp, Huntsville, TX Cooperative Extension Program- Prairie View A&M University
Jan. 1997 – May 2002	Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development Cooperative Extension Program Prairie View A&M University Harris County